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**LEONIDAS,**

**A POEM.**

**IN TWO VOLUMES.**









*Engraved by Fittler, from a drawing by Burney,  
after an original portrait by Hone, painted when  
W. Glover was in his prime.*

# LEONIDAS,

A POEM,

BY

RICHARD GLOVER.



*ADORNED WITH PLATES.*

VOL. I.

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THE SIXTH EDITION.

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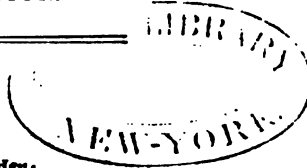
LONDON:

Printed by T. Bensley;

FOR F. J. DU ROVERAY, GREAT ST. HELENS;

AND SOLD BY T. BOOSEY, OLD BROAD STREET;

AND J. WRIGHT, PICCADILLY.



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1798.

Repair No. 778/06

## RICHARD GLOVER.

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MR. GLOVER, the author of the celebrated poem of Leonidas, was born in London, and was the son of John Glover Esq., an eminent Hamburgh merchant, who married Miss West, sister of the Right Honourable Richard West, Lord Chancellor of Ireland. Mr. Glover's uncle being in that high situation, it was originally intended that he should be brought up to the law; but the Lord Chancellor dying when his nephew was very young, the plan was altered, and he was brought up to his father's profession.

Mr. Glover, by a lady he married (Miss Nunn) of the county of Essex, and with whom he received a considerable fortune, had three

children; a daughter, who died young; Captain Glover, who died in the service of his country off the island of Jamaica, commanding his Majesty's ship Janus; and Richard, his surviving son, who served in the last parliament for the borough of Penryn in Cornwall.

He received the whole of his education under the Rev. Daniel Sanxay at Cheam school; a place which he afterwards delighted to visit, and sometimes attended the anniversary held of late years in London, where he seemed happy in relating his juvenile adventures. At this seminary he distinguished himself by the quickness of his progress, and early began to exhibit specimens of his poetical powers.

As a merchant he soon made a conspicuous figure; but his commercial affairs did not occupy his whole attention; he still found leisure to cultivate the study of poetry, and continued to associate with those who were eminent in

literature and science. One of his earliest friends was Green, the ingenious, though obscure, author of that truly original poem entitled the "Spleen," which, in 1737, soon after his death, was published by Mr. Glover. This excellent performance contains the following presage of his literary eminence, with an evident allusion to his Leonidas, which he had begun when very young.

But there's a youth that you can name,  
 Who needs no leading-strings to fame,  
 Whose quick maturity of brain  
 The birth of Pallas may explain:  
 Dreaming of whose depending fate,  
 I heard Melpomene debate;  
 This, this is he that was foretold  
 Should emulate our Greeks of old;  
 Inspir'd by me with sacred art,  
 He sings, and rules the varied heart;  
 If Jove's dread anger he rehearse,  
 We hear the thunder in his verse;  
 If he describe love turn'd to rage,  
 The furies riot on his page;  
 If he fair liberty and law,  
 By ruffian pow'r expiring, draw,  
 The keener passions then engage

Aright, and sanctify their rage;  
 If he attempt disastrous love,  
 We hear those plaints that wound the grove;  
 Within the kinder passions glow,  
 And tears, distill'd from pity, flow.

The observation made upon Gray, by his friend the late Earl of Orford, "that he never was a boy," has been applied to Glover. At the early age of 16 he wrote

A Poem to the Memory of Sir Isaac Newton; which was followed by

Leonidas, first printed in 1737.

London, or the Progress of Commerce, a poem not unworthy of the author of Leonidas.

Hosier's Ghost, one of the most pathetic and beautiful ballads in our language.

Boadicea, } tragedies, performed both with  
 Medea, } much applause.

And the Athenaid, or a sequel to Leonidas, and forming a counterpart to it, in thirty books, presented to the world, with a few alterations from the pen of a friend, in the year 1788.

He also wrote a second part of *Medea*, not yet performed.

*Leonidas* was inscribed to Lord Cobham, and, on its first appearance, was received by the public with great applause.

At the time of its publication a zeal, or rather rage, for liberty prevailed in England. A constellation of great men, distinguished by their virtues as well as by their talents, set themselves in opposition to the court. Every species of composition that bore the sacred name of freedom recommended itself to their protection, and soon obtained possession of the public favour; hence a poem founded on the noblest principles of liberty, and displaying the most brilliant examples of patriotism, soon found its way into the world. It was praised in the warmest terms by Lyttleton and Doctor Pemberton, and passed through three editions in 1737 and 1738; but, as its favourable reception



was not founded entirely on its intrinsic merits, it experienced afterwards, without deserving it, the fate of those literary productions, which are indebted for a temporary celebrity to the influence of party-principles.

It first came out in nine books; but in the last edition published by the author (in 1770) was extended to twelve; and had also several new characters added, besides placing the old ones in new situations. The improvements were very considerable; but the public attention was not sufficiently alive to recompense the pains bestowed on this once popular performance.

Though not in the highest class of epic poems, it cannot be read without delight. It is characterized by a bold spirit of liberty, by generous, tender, and noble sentiments. The author every where appears a virtuous man and a good citizen. The characters are finely descri-

minated, as is justly exemplified in Dr. Pemberton's learned commentary; and the style possesses many poetical graces, though it is sometimes familiar and prosaic. It abounds in the affecting, the tender, and the beautiful, rather than in the heroic and sublime. The parting of Leonidas and his wife is perhaps more interesting than that of Hector and Andromache. The episode of Ariana and Teribazus is poetical and pleasing. On the whole we may safely venture to place Leonidas by the side of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, Statius's *Thebaid*, Camoens's *Lusiad*, and the *Henriade* of Voltaire.

Mr. Glover passed a great portion of his time with Mr. Pitt, afterwards Earl of Chatham, Mr. George Lyttleton, afterwards Lord Lyttleton, Earl Temple, Lord Cobham, and many others of the same principles; his connection with whom introduced him to the notice of Frederick Prince of Wales, who honoured him

with his friendship, and distinguished him by his countenance and patronage.

His talents for public speaking, his knowledge of political affairs, and his information concerning trade and commerce, pointed him out to the merchants of London as a proper person to conduct their application to Parliament, on the subject of the neglect of their trade. He accepted the office; and in summing up the evidence gave very striking proofs of his oratorical powers. This remarkable speech was pronounced at the bar of the House of Commons, January 27, 1742, and soon afterwards published under the title of "A short account of the late application to Parliament made by the merchants of London, upon the neglect of their trade, with the evidence thereupon, as summed up by Mr. Glover." By his appearance in behalf of the merchants of London he acquired, and with great justice, the character of an able and steady patriot; and indeed, on

every occasion, he shewed his zeal for the commercial interests of the nation, as well as his attachment to the welfare of his countrymen in general, and that of the city of London in particular.

Our author, being induced by the impotunity of his friends, offered himself in the year 1751 as a candidate for the place of Chamberlain of the City of London, in opposition to the late Thomas Harrison Esq. Unfortunately for him he did not declare his intention till most of the livery had engaged their votes; to which circumstance was ascribed the loss of his election. On this occasion he addressed the livery in a very manly and animated speech.

In the parliament which met at the accession of his present majesty (1761), he was elected for Weymouth. He undertook to manage the interests of the merchants and traders of London concerned in the trade to Germany

and Holland, and of the dealers in foreign linens, in their application to Parliament in May 1774. Both the speeches made on these occasions were published within the same year.

In 1775 he engaged on behalf of the West India merchants, in their application to Parliament, examined the witnesses, and summed up the evidence in the same masterly manner he had done on a former occasion. For the assistance he afforded the merchants in this business he was complimented by them with a service of plate, of the value of 300*l*. The speech which he delivered in the house was printed in that year. This was the last opportunity he had of displaying in public his oratorical talents. Having now arrived at a period of life which demanded a recess from business, he retired, and wore out the remainder of his days with dignity and with honour, in the exercise of the virtues of private life, and in his attention to his muse. He died at his

house in Albemarle street, November 25, 1785, in the 75th year of his age, and was buried in the family vault in St. Edmund the King's in Lombard street.

We shall conclude this short account of the life and writings of our Author by the following observations upon Leonidas from the pen of Lyttleton.

“ Since I have read Leonidas,” says he (Common Sense, N<sup>o</sup> 10), “ I have been so full of all the beauties I met with in it, that, to give some vent, I found it necessary to write to you, and invite my countrymen to take part with me in the pleasure of admiring what so justly deserves their admiration. And in doing this I have yet a further view; I desire to do them good as well as please them; for never yet was an epic poem wrote with so noble and so useful a design; the whole plan and purpose of it being to shew the superiority of free-

dom over slavery; and how much virtue, public spirit, and the love of liberty, are preferable, both in their nature and effects, to riches, luxury, and the insolence of power.

“ This great and instructive moral is set forth by an action the most proper to illustrate it of all that ancient or modern history can afford, enforced by the most sublime spirit of poetry, and adorned by all the charms of an active and warm imagination, under the restraint of a cool and sober judgment.

“ And it has another special claim to protection; for, I will venture to say, there never was an epic poem which had so near a relation as this to common sense; the author of it not having allowed himself the liberty, so largely taken by his predecessors, of making excursions beyond the bounds, and out of sight of it, into the airy regions of poetical mythology. There are neither fighting gods, nor scolding

goddesses; neither miracles, nor enchantments; neither monsters, nor giants, in his work; but whatsoever human nature can afford that is most astonishing, marvellous, and sublime.

“ And it has this particular merit to recommend it, that, though it has quite the air of an ancient epic poem, there is not so much as a single simile in it that is borrowed from any of the ancients; and yet, I believe there is hardly any poem that has such a variety of beautiful comparisons; so just a confidence had the author in the extent and rich abundance of his own imagination.

“ The artful conduct of the principal design; the skill in connecting and adapting every episode to the carrying on and serving that design; the variety of characters, the great care to keep them, and distinguish each from the other by a propriety of sentiment and thought; all these are excellencies which the best judges



of poetry will be particularly pleased with in Leonidas.

“ Upon the whole, I look upon this poem as one of those few of distinguished worth and excellence, which will be handed down with respect to all posterity, and which, in the long revolution of past centuries, but two or three countries have been able to produce. And I cannot help congratulating my own, that, after having in the last age brought forth a Milton, she has in this produced two more such poets as we have the happiness to see flourish together; I mean Mr. Pope and Mr. Glover.”


## THE PREFACE.

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TO illustrate the following poem, to vindicate the subject from the censure of improbability, and to shew, by the concurring evidence of the best historians, that such disinterested public virtue did once exist, I have thought it would not be improper to fix the subsequent narration.

While Darius, the father of Xerxes, was yet on the throne of Persia, Cleomenes and Demaratus were kings in Lacedæmon, both descended from Hercules. Demaratus was unfortunately exposed by an uncertain rumour, which rendered his legitimacy suspected, to the malice and treachery of his colleague, who had

conceived a personal resentment against him; for Cleomenes, taking advantage of this report, persuaded the Spartans to examine into the birth of Demaratus, and refer the difficulty to the oracle of Delphi; and was assisted in his perfidious designs by a near relation of Demaratus, named Leutychides, who aspired to succeed him in his dignity. Cleomenes found means to corrupt the priestess of Delphi, who declared Demaratus not legitimate. Thus, by the base practices of his colleague Cleomenes, and of his kinsman Leutychides, Demaratus was expelled from his regal office in the commonwealth; a Lacedæmonian, distinguished in action and counsel, and the only king of Sparta, who, by obtaining the Olympic prize in the chariot-race, had increased the lustre of his country. He went into voluntary banishment, and, retiring to Asia, was there protected by Darius; while Leutychides succeeded to the regal authority in Sparta. Upon the death of Cleomenes Leonidas became king, who ruled



in conjunction with this Leutychides when Xerxes, the son of Darius, invaded Greece. The number of land and naval forces which accompanied that monarch, together with the servants, women, and other usual attendants on the army of an eastern prince, amounted to upwards of five millions, as reported by Herodotus, who wrote within a few years after the event, and publicly recited his history at the Olympic games. In this general assembly, not only from Greece itself, but from every part of the world wherever a colony of Grecians was planted, had he greatly exceeded the truth, he must certainly have been detected, and censured by some among so great a multitude; and such a voluntary falsehood must have entirely destroyed that merit and authority which have procured to Herodotus the veneration of all posterity, with the appellation of the father of history. On the first news of this attempt on their liberty, a convention, composed of deputies from the several states of Greece, was

immediately held at the Isthmus of Corinth, to consult on proper measures for the public safety. The Spartans also sent messengers to enquire of the oracle at Delphi into the event of the war, who returned with an answer from the priestess of Apollo, that either a king, descended from Hercules, must die, or Lacedæmon would be entirely destroyed. Leonidas immediately offered to sacrifice his life for the preservation of Lacedæmon; and, marching to Thermopylæ, possessed himself of that important pass with three hundred of his countrymen; who, with the forces of some other cities in the Peloponnesus, together with the Thebans, Thespians, and the troops of those states which adjoined to Thermopylæ, composed an army of near eight thousand men.

Xerxes was now advanced as far as Thessalia; when, hearing that a small body of Grecians was assembled at Thermopylæ, with some Lacedæmonians at their head, and among the

rest Leonidas, a descendant of Hercules, he dispatched a single horseman before to observe their numbers, and discover their designs. When this horseman approached he could not take a view of the whole camp, which lay concealed behind a rampart, formerly raised by the Phocians at the entrance of Thermopylæ on the side of Greece; so that his whole attention was engaged by those who were on guard before the wall, and who at that instant chanced to be the Lacedæmonians. Their manner and gestures greatly astonished the Persian. Some were amusing themselves in gymnastic exercises; others were combing their hair; and all discovered a total disregard of him, whom they suffered to depart, and report to Xerxes what he had seen; which appearing to that prince quite ridiculous, he sent for Demaratus, who was with him in the camp, and required him to explain this strange behaviour of his countrymen. Demaratus informed him that it was a custom among the Spartans to comb down

and adjust their hair when they were determined to fight till the last extremity. Xerxes, notwithstanding, in the confidence of his power, sent ambassadors to the Grecians to demand their arms, to bid them disperse, and become his friends and allies; which proposals being received with disdain, he commanded the Medes and Cissians to seize on the Grecians, and bring them alive into his presence. These nations immediately attacked the Grecians, and were soon repulsed with great slaughter: fresh troops still succeeded; but with no better fortune than the first, being opposed to an enemy not only superior in valour and resolution, but who had the advantage of discipline, and were furnished with better arms, both offensive and defensive.

Plutarch, in his Laconic apothegms, reports that the Persian king offered to invest Leonidas with the sovereignty of Greece, provided he would join his arms to those of Persia. This offer was too considerable a condescension to

have been made before a trial of their force, and must therefore have been proposed by Xerxes after such a series of ill success as might probably have depressed the insolence of his temper; and it may be easily admitted that the virtue of Leonidas was proof against any temptations of that nature. Whether this be a fact or not, thus much is certain, that Xerxes was reduced to extreme difficulties by this resolute defence of Thermopylæ; till he was extricated from his distress by a Malian, named Epialtes, who conducted twenty thousand of the Persian army into Greece, through a pass which lay higher up the country, among the mountains of Oeta: whereas the passage at Thermopylæ was situated on the sea-shore between those mountains and the Malian bay. The defence of the upper pass had been committed to a thousand Phocians, who, upon the first sight of the enemy, inconsiderately abandoned their station, and put themselves in array upon a neighbouring eminence; but the Persians wisely




avoided an engagement, and with the utmost expedition marched to Thermopylæ.

Leonidas no sooner received information that the Barbarians had passed the mountains, and would soon be in a situation to surround him, than he commanded the allies to retreat, reserving the three hundred Spartans and four hundred Thebans, whom, as they followed him with reluctance at first, he now compelled to stay. But the Thespians, whose number amounted to seven hundred, would not be persuaded by Leonidas to forsake him. Their commander was Demophilus; and the most eminent amongst them for his valour was Dithyrambus, the son of Harmatides. Among the Lacedæmonians the most conspicuous next to Leonidas was Dieneces, who, being told that the multitude of Persian arrows would obscure the sun, replied, the battle would then be in the shade. Two brothers, named Alpheus and Maron, are also recorded for their

valour, and were Lacedæmonians. Megistias, a priest, by birth an Acarnanian, and held in high honour at Sparta, refused to desert Leonidas, though entreated by him to consult his safety; but sent away his only son, and remained himself behind to die with the Lacedæmonians.

Herodotus relates that Leonidas drew up his men in the broadest part of Thermopylæ; where, being encompassed by the Persians, they fell with great numbers of their enemies: but Plutarch, Diodorus Siculus, and others, affirm that the Grecians attacked the very camp of Xerxes in the night. Both these dispositions are reconcileable to probability. He might have made an attack on the Persian camp in the night, and in the morning have withdrawn his forces back to Thermopylæ, where they would be enabled to make the most obstinate resistance, and sell their lives upon the dearest terms. The action is thus described by Dio-

dorus. "The Grecians, having now rejected all thoughts of safety, preferring glory to life, unanimously called on their general to lead them against the Persians before they could be apprised that their friends had passed round the mountains. Leonidas embraced the occasion which the ready zeal of his soldiers afforded, and commanded them forthwith to dine as men who were to sup in Elysium. Himself, in consequence of this command, took a repast, as the means to furnish strength for a long continuance, and to give perseverance in danger. After a short refreshment the Grecians were now prepared, and received orders to assail the enemies in their camp, to put all they met to the sword, and force a passage to the royal pavilion; when, formed into one compact body, with Leonidas himself at their head, they marched against the Persians, and entered their camp at the dead of night. The Barbarians, wholly unprepared, and blindly conjecturing that their friends were defeated,



and themselves attacked by the united power of Greece, hurry together from their tents with the utmost disorder and consternation. Many were slain by Leonidas and his party, but much greater multitudes by their own troops, to whom, in the midst of this blind confusion, they were not distinguishable from enemies; for, as night took away the power of discerning truly, and the tumult was spread universally over the camp, a prodigious slaughter must naturally ensue. The want of command, of a watch-word, and of confidence in themselves, reduced the Persians to such a state of confusion, that they destroyed each other without distinction. Had Xerxes continued in the royal pavilion, the Grecians, without difficulty, might have brought the war to a speedy conclusion by his death; but he at the beginning of the tumult betook himself to flight with the utmost precipitation; when the Grecians, rushing into the tent, put to the sword most of those who were left behind; then, while night lasted, they

ranged through the whole camp in diligent search of the tyrant. When morning appeared, the Persians, perceiving the true state of things, held the inconsiderable number of their enemies in contempt; yet were so terrified at their valour, that they avoided a near engagement; but, enclosing the Grecians on every side, showered their darts and arrows upon them at a distance, and in the end destroyed their whole body. In this manner fell the Grecians, who, under the conduct of Leonidas, defended the pass of Thermopylæ. All must admire the virtue of these men, who with one consent, maintaining the post allotted by their country, cheerfully renounced their lives for the common safety of Greece, and esteemed a glorious death more eligible than to live with dishonour. Nor is the consternation of the Persians incredible. Who among those Barbarians could have conjectured such an event? Who could have expected that five hundred men would have dared to attack a million?

Wherefore shall not all posterity reflect on the virtue of these men, as the object of imitation, who, though the loss of their lives was the necessary consequence of their undertaking, were yet unconquered in their spirit; and among all the great names, delivered down to remembrance, are the only heroes who obtained more glory in their fall than others from the brightest victories? With justice may they be deemed the preservers of the Grecian liberty, even preferably to those who were conquerors in the battles fought afterwards with Xerxes; for the memory of that valour, exerted in the defence of Thermopylæ, for ever dejected the Barbarians, while the Greeks were fired with emulation to equal such a pitch of magnanimity. Upon the whole, there never were any before these who attained to immortality through the mere excess of virtue; whence the praise of their fortitude hath not been recorded by historians only, but hath been celebrated by numbers of poets, among others by Simonides the lyric."

Pausanias, in his *Laconics*, considers the defence of Thermopylæ by Leonidas as an action superior to any achieved by his contemporaries, and to all the exploits of preceding ages. "Never," says he, "had Xerxes beheld Greece, and laid in ashes the city of Athens, had not his forces under Hydarnes been conducted through a path over mount Oeta; and, by that means encompassing the Greeks, overcome and slain Leonidas." Nor is it improbable that such a commander, at the head of such troops, should have maintained his post in so narrow a pass till the whole army of Xerxes had perished by famine. At the same time his navy had been miserably shattered by a storm, and worsted in an engagement with the Athenians at Artemisium.

To conclude, the fall of Leonidas and his brave companions, so meritorious to their country, and so glorious to themselves, hath obtained such a high degree of veneration and ap-

plause from past ages, that few among the ancient compilers of history have been silent on this amazing instance of magnanimity, and zeal for liberty; and many are the epigrams and inscriptions now extant, some on the whole body, others on particulars, who died at Thermopylæ, still preserving their memory in every nation conversant with learning, and at this distance of time still rendering their virtue the object of admiration and of praise.

I shall now detain the reader no longer than to take this public occasion of expressing my sincere regard for the Lord Viscount Cobham, and the sense of my obligations for the early honour of his friendship; to him I inscribe the following poem; and herein I should be justified, independent of all personal motives, from his lordship's public conduct, so highly distinguished by his disinterested zeal and unshaken fidelity to his country, not less in civil life than in the field: to him therefore a poem, founded

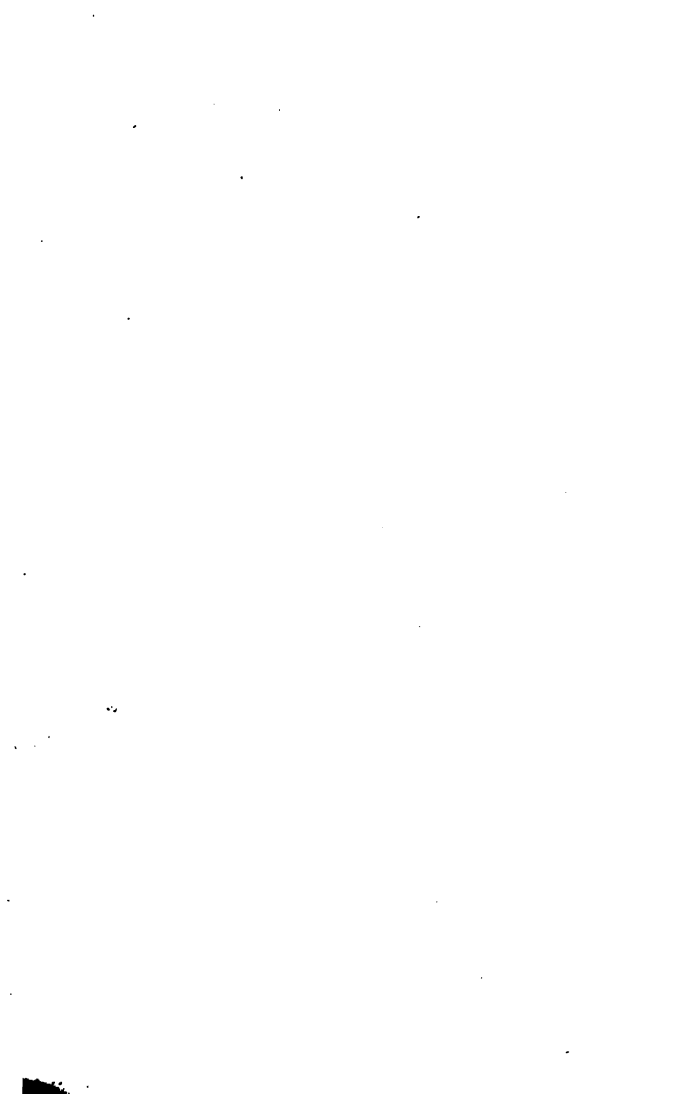


**xxx**

on a character eminent for military glory and  
love of liberty, is due from the nature of the  
subject.

**R. GLOVER.**





# LEONIDAS.

BOOK I.

## THE ARGUMENT.

**Xerxes**, king of Persia, having drawn together the whole force of his empire, and passed over the Hellespont into Thrace, with a design to conquer Greece, the deputies from the several states of that country, who had some time before assembled themselves at the Isthmus of Corinth, to deliberate on proper measures for resisting the invader, were no sooner apprized of his march into Thrace than they determined, without further delay, to dispute his passage at the straits of Thermopylæ, the most accessible part of Greece on the side of Thrace and Thessaly. **Alpheus**, one of the deputies from Sparta, repairs to that city, and communicates this resolution to his countrymen; who chanced that day to be assembled in expectation of receiving an answer from Apollo, to whom they had sent a messenger to consult about the event of the war. **Leutychides**, one of their two kings, counsels the people to advance no farther than the Isthmus of Corinth, which separates the Peloponnesus, where Lacedæmon was situated, from the rest of Greece; but **Leonidas**, the other king, dissuades them from it. **Agis**, the messenger, who had been deputed to Delphi, and brother to the queen of Leonidas, returns with the oracle; which denounces ruin to the Lacedæmonians, unless one of their kings lays down his life for the public. **Leonidas** offers himself for the victim. Three hundred more are appointed, all citizens of Sparta, and heads of families, to accompany, and die with, him at Thermopylæ. **Alpheus** returns to the Isthmus. **Leonidas**, after an interview with his queen, departs from Lacedæmon. At the end of six days he encamps near the Isthmus, when he is joined by **Alpheus**; who describes the auxiliaries, then waiting at the Isthmus; those who are already possessed of Thermopylæ, as also the pass itself; and concludes with relating the captivity of his brother **Polydorus** in Persia.

# LEONIDAS.

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## BOOK I.

THE virtuous Spartan, who resign'd his life  
To save his country at th' Oetæan straits,  
Thermopylæ, when all the peopled east  
In arms with Xerxes fill'd the Grecian plains,  
O Muse, record! The Hellespont they pass'd,  
O'erpow'ring Thrace. The dreadful tidings swift  
To Corinth flew. Her isthmus was the seat  
Of Grecian council. Alpheus thence returns  
To Lacedæmon. In assembly full  
He finds the Spartan people with their kings;  
Their kings, who boast an origin divine,  
From Hercules descended. They the sons  
Of Lacedæmon had conven'd, to learn  
The sacred mandates of th' immortal gods,  
That morn expected from the Delphian dome.  
But Alpheus sudden their attention drew,

And thus address'd them. ' For immediate war,  
 My countrymen, prepare. Barbarian tents  
 Already fill the trembling bounds of Thrace.  
 The Isthmian council hath decreed to guard  
 Thermopylæ, the Locrian gate of Greece.'

Here Alpheus paus'd. Leutychnides, who shar'd  
 With great Leonidas the sway, uprose  
 And spake. ' Ye citizens of Sparta, hear.  
 Why from her bosom should Laconia send  
 Her valiant race to wage a distant war  
 Beyond the Isthmus? There the gods have plac'd  
 Our native barrier. In this favour'd land,  
 Which Pelops govern'd, us of Doric blood  
 That Isthmus inaccessible secures.  
 There let our standards rest. Your solid strength  
 If once you scatter, in defence of states  
 Remote and feeble, you betray your own,  
 And merit Jove's derision.' With assent  
 The Spartans heard. Leonidas reply'd—

' O most ungen'rous counsel! most unwise!  
 Shall we, confining to that Isthmian fence

Our efforts, leave beyond it ev'ry state  
 Disown'd, expos'd? Shall Athens, while her fleets  
 Unceasing watch th' innumerable foes,  
 And trust th' impending dangers of the field  
 To Sparta's well-known valour, shall she hear  
 That to Barbarian violence we leave  
 Her unprotected walls? Her hoary sires,  
 Her helpless matrons, and their infant race  
 To servitude and shame? Her guardian gods  
 Will yet preserve them. Neptune o'er his main,  
 With Pallas, pow'r of wisdom, at their helms,  
 Will soon transport them to a happier clime,  
 Safe from insulting foes, from false allies;  
 And eleutherian Jove will bless their flight.  
 Then shall we feel the unresisted force  
 Of Persia's navy, deluging our plains  
 With inexhausted numbers. Half the Greeks,  
 By us betray'd to bondage, will support  
 A Persian lord, and lift th' avenging spear  
 For our destruction. But, my friends, reject  
 Such mean, such dang'rous counsels, which would blast  
 Your long establish'd honours, and assist  
 The proud invader. O eternal king



Of gods and mortals, elevate our minds!  
 Each low and partial passion thence expel!  
 Greece is our gen'ral mother. All must join  
 In her defence, or sep'rate each must fall.'

This said, authority and shame controll'd  
 The mute assembly. Agis too appear'd.  
 He from the Delphian cavern was return'd,  
 Where, taught by Phœbus on Parnassian cliffs,  
 The Pythian maid unfolded heaven's decrees.  
 He came; but discontent and grief o'ercast  
 His anxious brow. Reluctant was his tongue,  
 Yet seem'd full charg'd to speak. Religious dread  
 Each heart relax'd. On ev'ry visage hung  
 Sad expectation. Not a whisper told  
 The silent fear. Intensely all were fix'd,  
 All still as death, to hear the solemn tale.  
 As o'er the western waves, when ev'ry storm  
 Is hush'd within its cavern, and a breeze,  
 Soft breathing, lightly with its wings along  
 The slacken'd cordage glides, the sailor's ear  
 Perceives no sound throughout the vast expanse;  
 None, but the murmurs of the sliding prow,

Which slowly parts the smooth and yielding main;  
 So through the wide and list'ning crowd no sound,  
 No voice, but thine, O Agis, broke the air;  
 While thus the issue of thy awful charge  
 Thy lips deliver'd. ' Spartans, in your name  
 I went to Delphi. I inquir'd the doom  
 Of Lacedæmon from th' impending war,  
 When in these words the deity reply'd—

" Inhabitants of Sparta, Persia's arms  
 Shall lay your proud and ancient seat in dust,  
 Unless a king, from Hercules deriv'd,  
 Cause Lacedæmon for his death to mourn." "

As, when the hand of Perseus had disclos'd  
 The snakes of dire Medusa, all who view'd  
 The Gorgon features were congeal'd to stone,  
 With ghastly eyeballs, on the hero bent,  
 And horror, living in their marble form;  
 Thus, with amazement rooted where they stood,  
 In speechless terror frozen, on their kings  
 The Spartans gaz'd: but soon their anxious looks  
 All on the great Leonidas unite,

Long known his country's refuge. He alone  
 Remains unshaken. Rising, he displays  
 His godlike presence. Dignity and grace  
 Adorn his frame, where manly beauty joins  
 With strength Herculean. On his aspect shine  
 Sublimest virtue and desire of fame,  
 Where justice gives the laurel; in his eye  
 The inextinguishable spark, which fires  
 The souls of patriots; while his brow supports  
 Undaunted valour, and contempt of death.  
 Serene he cast his looks around, and spake—

' Why this astonishment on ev'ry face,  
 Ye men of Sparta? Does the name of death  
 Create this fear and wonder? O my friends,  
 Why do we labour through the arduous paths  
 Which lead to virtue? Fruitless were the toil,  
 Above the reach of human feet were plac'd  
 The distant summit, if the fear of death  
 Could intercept our passage. But a frown  
 Of unavailing terror he assumes  
 To shake the firmness of a mind which knows  
 That, wanting virtue, life is pain and wo,

That, wanting liberty, ev'n virtue mourns,  
 And looks around for happiness in vain.  
 Then speak, O Sparta, and demand my life.  
 My heart, exulting, answers to thy call,  
 And smiles on glorious fate. To live with fame  
 The gods allow to many; but to die  
 With equal lustre is a blessing Jove  
 Among the choicest of his boons reserves,  
 Which but on few his sparing hand bestows.'

Salvation thus to Sparta he proclaim'd.  
 Joy, wrapt awhile in admiration, paus'd,  
 Suspending praise; nor praise at last resounds  
 In high acclaim to rend the arch of heav'n;  
 A reverential murmur breathes applause.  
 So were the pupils of Lycurgus train'd  
 To bridle nature. Public fear was dumb  
 Before their senate, ephori, and kings,  
 Nor exultation into clamour broke.  
 Amidst them rose Dieneces, and thus—

' Haste to Thermopylæ. To Xerxes shew  
 The discipline of Spartans, long renown'd

In rigid warfare, with enduring minds,  
 Which neither pain, nor want, nor danger, bend.  
 Fly to the gate of Greece, which open stands  
 To slavery and rapine. They will shrink  
 Before your standard, and their native seats  
 Resume in abject Asia. Arm, ye sires,  
 Who with a growing race have bless'd the state:  
 That race, your parents, gen'ral Greece, forbid  
 Delay. Heav'n summons. Equal to the cause  
 A chief behold. Can Spartans ask for more?'

Bold Alpheus next. 'Command my swift return  
 Amid the Isthmian council, to declare  
 Your instant march.' His dictates all approve.  
 Back to the Isthmus he unweary'd speeds.

Now from th' assembly with majestic steps  
 Forth moves their godlike king, with conscious worth  
 His gen'rous bosom glowing. Such the port  
 Of his divine progenitor; impell'd  
 By ardent virtue, so Alcides trod  
 Invincible, to face in horrid war  
 The triple form of Geryon, or against  
 The bulk of huge Antæus match his strength.

Say, Muse, what heroes, by example fir'd,  
 Nor less by honour, offer'd now to bleed ?  
 Dienece the foremost, brave and staid,  
 Of vet'ran skill to range in martial fields  
 Well-order'd lines of battle. Maron next,  
 Twin-born with Alpheus, shews his manly frame.  
 Tim Agis follow'd, brother to the queen  
 Of great Leonidas, his friend, in war  
 His try'd companion. Graceful were his steps,  
 And gentle his demeanour. Still his soul  
 Reserv'd the purest virtue, though refin'd  
 By arts unknown to Lacedæmon's race.  
 High was his office. He, when Sparta's weal  
 Upport and counsel from the gods requir'd,  
 Was sent the hallow'd messenger, to learn  
 Their mystic will, in oracles declar'd,  
 From rocky Delphi, from Dodona's shade,  
 Or sea-encircled Delos, or the cell  
 Of dark Trophonius, round Bœotia known.  
 Three hundred more complete th' intrepid band ;  
 Lustrious fathers all of gen'rous sons,  
 The future guardians of Laconia's state.  
 Then rose Megistias, leading forth his son,

Young Menalippus. Not of Spartan blood  
 Were they. Megistias, heav'n-enlighten'd seer,  
 Had left his native Acarnanian shore;  
 Along the border of Eurotas chose  
 His place of dwelling. For his worth receiv'd,  
 And hospitably cherish'd, he the wreath  
 Pontific bore in Lacedæmon's camp,  
 Serene in danger, nor his sacred arm  
 From warlike toil secluding, nor untaught  
 To wield the sword, and poise the weighty spear.

But to his home Leonidas retir'd.  
 There calm in secret thought he thus explor'd  
 His mighty soul, while nature in his breast  
 A short emotion rais'd. ' What sudden grief,  
 What cold reluctance, now unmans my heart,  
 And whispers that I fear? Can death dismay  
 Leonidas; death, often seen and scorn'd,  
 When clad most dreadful in the battle's front?  
 Or to relinquish life in all its pride,  
 With all my honours blooming round my head,  
 Repines my soul; or rather to forsake,  
 Eternally forsake, my weeping wife,

My infant offspring, and my faithful friends?  
 Leonidas, awake! Shall these withstand  
 The public safety? Hark! thy country calls.  
 O sacred voice, I hear thee. At the sound  
 Reviving virtue brightens in my heart;  
 Fear vanishes before her. Death, receive  
 My unreluctant hand. Immortal fame,  
 Thou too, attendant on my righteous fall,  
 With wings unwearied wilt protect my tomb.'

His virtuous soul the hero had confirm'd  
 When Agis enter'd. ' If my tardy lips,'  
 He thus began, ' have hitherto forborne  
 To bring their grateful tribute of applause,  
 Which, as a Spartan, to thy worth I owe,  
 Forgive the brother of thy queen. Her grief  
 Detain'd me from thee. O unequall'd man,  
 Though Lacedæmon call thy prime regard,  
 Forget not her, sole victim of distress  
 Amid the general safety. To assuage  
 Such pain fraternal tenderness is weak.'

The king embrac'd him, and reply'd, ' O best,  
 O dearest man, conceive not but my soul



To her is fondly bound, from whom my days  
 Their largest share of happiness deriv'd.  
 Can I, who yield my breath lest others mourn,  
 Lest thousands should be wretched, when she pines,  
 More lov'd than any, tho' less dear than all,  
 Can I neglect her griefs? In future days,  
 If thou with grateful memory record  
 My name and fate, O Sparta, pass not this  
 Unheeded by. The life for thee resign'd  
 Knew not a painful hour to tire my soul,  
 Nor were they common joys I left behind.'

So spake the patriot, and his heart o'erflow'd  
 In tend'rest passion. Then in eager haste  
 The faithful partner of his bed he sought.  
 Amid her weeping children sat the queen  
 Immovable and mute. Her swimming eyes  
 Bent to the earth. Her arms were folded o'er  
 Her lab'ring bosom, blotted with her tears.  
 As, when a dusky mist involves the sky,  
 The moon through all the dreary vapours spreads  
 The radiant vesture of her silver light  
 O'er the dull face of nature; so the queen,

Divinely graceful, shining through her grief,  
 brighten'd the cloud of wo. Her lord approach'd.  
 Soon, as in gentlest phrase his well-known voice  
 awak'd her drooping spirit, for a time  
 Care was appeas'd. She lifts her languid head.  
 He gives this utterance to her tender thoughts—

‘ O thou, whose presence is my sole delight;  
 If thus, Leonidas, thy looks and words  
 Can check the rapid current of distress,  
 How am I mark'd for misery! How long!  
 When of life's journey less than half is pass'd,  
 And I must hear those calming sounds no more,  
 Nor see that face which makes affliction smile!’

This said, returning grief o'erwhelms her breast.  
 Her orphan children, her devoted lord,  
 Pale, bleeding, breathless on the field of death,  
 Her ever-during solitude of wo,  
 All rise in mingled horror to her sight,  
 When thus in bitterest agony she spake—

‘ O whither art thou going from my arms?

Shall I no more behold thee? Oh! no more,  
 In conquest clad, o'erspread with glorious dust,  
 Wilt thou return to greet thy native soil,  
 And find thy dwelling joyful! Ah! too brave,  
 Why would'st thou hurry to the dreary gates  
 Of death, uncall'd? Another might have bled,  
 Like thee a victim of Alcides' race,  
 Less dear to all, and Sparta been secure.  
 Now ev'ry eye with mine is drown'd in tears.  
 All with these babes lament a father lost.  
 Alas! how heavy is our lot of pain!  
 Our sighs must last when ev'ry other breast  
 Exults in safety, purchas'd by our loss.  
 Thou didst not heed our anguish—didst not seek  
 One pause for my instruction how to bear  
 Thy endless absence, or like thee to die."

Unutterable sorrow here confin'd  
 Her voice. These words Leonidas return'd—

' I see, I share thy agony. My soul  
 Ne'er knew how warm the prevalence of love,  
 How strong a parent's feelings, till this hour;

Nor was she once insensible to thee  
 In all her fervour to assert my fame.  
 How had the honours of my name been stain'd  
 By hesitation? Shameful life, preferr'd  
 By an inglorious colleague, would have left  
 No choice but what were infamy to shun,  
 Not virtue to accept. Then deem no more  
 That, of thy love regardless, or thy tears,  
 I rush uncall'd to death. The voice of fate,  
 The gods, my fame, my country, press my doom.  
 Oh! thou dear mourner! Wherefore swells afresh  
 That tide of wo? Leonidas must fall.  
 Alas! far heavier misery impends  
 O'er thee and these, if, soften'd by thy tears,  
 I shamefully refuse to yield that breath,  
 Which justice, glory, liberty, and heav'n,  
 Claim for my country, for my sons and thee.  
 Think on my long unalter'd love. Reflect  
 On my paternal fondness. Hath my heart  
 E'er known a pause in love, or pious care?  
 Now shall that care, that tenderness be shewn  
 Most warm, most faithful. When thy husband dies  
 For Lacedæmon's safety; thou wilt share,

Thou and thy children, the diffusive good.  
 I am selected by th' immortal gods  
 To save a people. Should my timid heart  
 That sacred charge abandon, I should plunge  
 Thee too in shame, in sorrow. Thou wouldst mourn  
 With Lacedæmon; wouldst with her sustain  
 Thy painful portion of oppression's weight.  
 Behold thy sons, now worthy of their name,  
 Their Spartan birth. Their growing bloom would pine  
 Depress'd, dishonour'd, and their youthful hearts  
 Beat at the sound of liberty no more.  
 On their own merit, on their father's fame,  
 When he the Spartan freedom hath confirm'd,  
 Before the world illustrious will they rise,  
 Their country's bulwark, and their mother's joy.'

Here paus'd the patriot. In religious awe  
 Grief heard the voice of virtue. No complaint  
 The solemn silence broke. Tears ceas'd to flow;  
 Ceas'd for a moment, soon again to stream.  
 Behold, in arms before the palace drawn,  
 His brave companions of the war demand  
 Their leader's presence. Then her griefs, renew'd,





W. Hamilton del. R.A.

F. Bartolozzi sc. R.A.


*In speechless anguish on the hero's breast  
She sinks, on every side his children press*

*Lucan. Book 9.*

Surpassing utt'rance, intercept her sighs.  
 Each accent freezes on her falt'ring tongue.  
 In ~~speechless~~ anguish on the hero's breast  
 She sinks. On ev'ry side his children press,  
 Hang on his knees, and kiss his honour'd hand.  
 His soul no longer struggles to confine  
 Her agitation. Down the hero's cheek,  
 Down flows the manly sorrow. Great in wo,  
 Amid his children, who enclose him round,  
 He stands, indulging tenderness and love  
 In graceful tears, when thus, with lifted eyes  
 Address'd to heaven, 'Thou ever-living pow'r,  
 Look down propitious, sire of gods and men!  
 O to this faithful woman, whose desert  
 May claim thy favour, grant the hours of peace!  
 And thou, my bright forefather, seed of Jove,  
 O Hercules, neglect not these thy race!  
 But, since that spirit I from thee derive  
 Transports me from them to resistless fate,  
 Be thou their guardian! Teach them, like thyself,  
 By glorious labours to embellish life,  
 And from their father let them learn to die!'



Here ending, forth he issues, and assumes  
Before the ranks his station of command.  
They now proceed. So mov'd the host of heav'n  
On Phlegra's plains, to meet the giant sons  
Of earth and Titan. From Olympus march'd  
The deities embattled; while their king  
Tow'r'd in the front, with thunder in his grasp.  
Thus through the streets of Lacedæmon pass'd  
Leonidas. Before his footsteps bow  
The multitude, exulting. On he treads  
Rever'd. Unsated, their enraptur'd sight  
Pursues his graceful stature, and their tongues  
Extol and hail him as their guardian god.  
Firm in his nervous hand he gripes the spear.  
Low as the ankles, from his shoulders hangs  
The massy shield, and o'er his burnish'd helm  
The purple plumage nods. Harmonious youths,  
Around whose brows entwining laurels play,  
In lofty-sounding strains his praise record;  
While snowy-finger'd virgins all the way  
Bestrew with od'rous garlands. Now his breast  
Is all possess'd by glory; which dispell'd



Whate'er of grief remain'd, or vain regret  
 For those he left behind. The rev'rend train  
 Of Lacedæmon's senate last appear,  
 To take their final, solemn leave, and grace  
 Their hero's parting steps. Around him flow  
 In civil pomp their venerable robes,  
 Mix'd with the blaze of arms. The shining troop  
 Of warriors press behind him. Maron here,  
 With Menalippus, warm in flow'ry prime;  
 There Agis, there Megistias, and the chief  
 Dieneces. Laconia's dames ascend  
 The loftiest mansions; thronging o'er the roofs,  
 Applaud their sons, their husbands, as they march.  
 So parted Argo from th' Iolchian strand  
 To plough the foaming surge. Thessalia's nymphs,  
 Rang'd on the cliffs, o'ershading Neptune's face,  
 Still on the distant vessel fix'd their eyes  
 Admiring; still in pæans bless'd the helm,  
 By Greece intrusted with her chosen sons  
 For high adventures on the Colchian shore.

Swift on his course Leonidas proceeds,  
 Soon is Eurotas pass'd, and Lerna's bank,

Where his victorious ancestor subdu'd  
 The many-headed Hydra, and the lake  
 To endless fame consign'd. Th' unweary'd bands  
 Next through the pines of Mænalus he led,  
 And down Parthenius urg'd the rapid toil.  
 Six days incessant was their march pursu'd,  
 When to their ear the hoarse-resounding waves  
 Beat on the Isthmus. Here the tents are spread.  
 Below the wide horizon then the sun  
 Had dipp'd his beamy locks. The queen of night  
 Gleam'd from the centre of th' ethereal vault,  
 And o'er the raven plumes of darkness shed  
 Her placid light. Leonidas detains  
 Dienece and Agis. Open stands  
 The tall pavilion, and admits the moon.  
 As here they sit conversing, from the hill,  
 Which rose before them, one of noble port  
 Is seen descending. Lightly down the slope  
 He treads. He calls aloud. They heard, they knew  
 The voice of Alpheus, whom the king address'd—

' O thou, with swiftness by the gods endu'd  
 To match the ardour of thy daring soul,

What from the Isthmus draws thee? Do the Greeks  
Neglect to arm and face the public foe?’

‘ Good news gives wings,’ said Alpheus. ‘ Greece is  
arm’d.

The neighb’ring Isthmus holds th’ Arcadian bands.  
From Mantinea Diophantus leads  
Five hundred spears; nor less from Tegea’s walls  
With Hegesander move. A thousand more,  
Who in Orchomenus reside, and range  
Along Parrhasius or Cyllene’s brow,  
Who near the foot of Erymanthus dwell,  
Or on Alphean banks, with various chiefs,  
Expect thy presence. Most is Clonius fam’d,  
Of stature huge, unshaken rock of war.  
Four hundred warriors brave Alcmaeon draws  
From stately Corinth’s tow’rs. Two hundred march  
From Phlius: them Eupalamus commands.  
An equal number of Mycenæ’s race  
Aristobulus heads. Through fear alone  
Of thee, and threat’ning Greece, the Thebans arm.  
A few in Thebes authority and rule  
Usurp. Corrupted with Barbarian gold,

They quench the gen'rous, eleutherian flame  
 In ev'ry heart. The eloquent they bribe.  
 By specious tales the multitude they cheat,  
 Establishing base measures on the plea  
 Of public safety. Others are immers'd  
 In all the sloth of plenty, who, unmov'd,  
 In shameful ease, behold the state betray'd.  
 Aw'd by thy name, four hundred took the field.  
 The wily Anaxander is their chief  
 With Leontiades. To see their march  
 I staid; then hasten'd to survey the straits,  
 Which thou shalt render sacred to renown.'

For ever mingled with a crumbling soil,  
 Which moulders round th' indented Malian coast,  
 The sea rolls slimy. On a solid rock,  
 Which forms the inmost limit of a bay,  
 Thermopylæ is stretch'd. Where broadest spread,  
 It measures thræscore paces, bounded here  
 By the salt ooze, which underneath presents  
 A dreary surface; there the lofty cliffs  
 Of wooded Ceta overlook the pass,  
 And far beyond, o'er half the surge below,

Their horrid umbrage cast. Across the mouth  
 An ancient bulwark of the Phocians stands,  
 A wall with gates and tow'rs. The Locrian force  
 Was marching forward. Them I pass'd, to greet  
 Demophilus of Thespia, who had pitch'd  
 Seven hundred spears before th' important fence.  
 His brother's son attends the rev'rend chief,  
 Young Dithyrambus. He for noble deeds,  
 Yet more for temperance of mind, renown'd,  
 In early bloom with brightest honours shines,  
 Nor wantons in the blaze. Here Agis spake—

' Well hast thou painted that illustrious youth.  
 He is my host at Thespia. Though adorn'd  
 With various wreaths, by fame, by fortune bless'd,  
 His gentle virtues take from Envy's lips  
 Their blasting venom; and her baneful eye  
 Strives on his worth to smile.' In silence all  
 Again remain, when Alpheus thus proceeds—

' Platæa's chosen veterans I saw,  
 Small in their number, matchless in their fame.  
 Diomedon the leader. Keen his sword

At Marathon was felt, where Asia bled.  
 These guard Thermopylæ. Among the hills,  
 Unknown to strangers, winds an upper strait,  
 Which by a thousand Phocians is secur'd.  
 Ere these brave Greeks I quitted, in the bay  
 A stately chieftain of th' Athenian fleet  
 Arriv'd. I join'd him. Copious in thy praise,  
 He utter'd rapture, but austerey blam'd  
 Laconia's tardy counsels; while the ships  
 Of Athens long had stemm'd Eubœan tides,  
 Which flow not distant from our future post.  
 This was the far-fam'd Æschylus, by Mars,  
 By Phœbus lov'd. Parnassus him proclaims  
 The first of Attic poets; him the plains  
 Of Marathon a soldier, try'd in arms.'

' Well may Athenians murmur,' said the king.  
 ' Too long hath Sparta slumber'd on her shield.  
 By morn beyond the Isthmus we will spread  
 A gen'rous banner. In Laconian strains  
 Of Alcman and Terpander lives the fame  
 Of our forefathers. Let our deeds attract  
 The brighter muse of Athens, in the song

Of Æschylus divine. Now frame thy choice.  
 Share in our fate; or, hast'ning home, report  
 How much already thy discerning mind,  
 Thy active limbs, have merited from me;  
 How serv'd thy country.' From th' impatient lips  
 Of Alpheus swift these fervid accents broke—

‘ I have not measur'd such a tract of land,  
 Have not, untir'd, beheld the setting sun,  
 Nor through the shade of midnight urg'd my steps,  
 To animate the Grecians, that myself  
 Might be exempt from warlike toil, or death.  
 Return? Ah! no. A second time my speed  
 Shall visit thee, Thermopylæ. My limbs  
 Shall at thy side, Leonidas, obtain  
 An honourable grave. And, oh! amid  
 His country's perils, if a Spartan breast  
 May feel a private sorrow, fierce revenge  
 I seek, not only for th' insulted state,  
 But for a brother's wrongs. A younger hope,  
 Than I and Maron, bless'd our father's years,  
 Child of his age, and Polydorus nam'd.  
 His mind, while tender in his op'ning prime,



Was bent to strenuous virtue. Gen'rous scorn  
 Of pain, or danger, taught his early strength  
 To struggle patient with severest toils.  
 Oft, when inclement winter chill'd the air,  
 When frozen show'rs had swoln Eurotas' stream,  
 Amid th' impetuous channel would he plunge,  
 To breast the torrent. On a fatal day,  
 As in the sea his active limbs he bath'd,  
 A savage corsair of the Persian king,  
 My brother, naked and defenceless, bore,  
 Ev'n in my sight, to Asia; there to waste,  
 With all the promise of its growing worth,  
 His youth in bondage. Tedious were the tale,  
 Should I recount my pains, my father's woes,  
 The days he wept, the sleepless nights he beat  
 His aged bosom. And shall Alpheus' spear  
 Be absent from Thermopylæ, nor claim,  
 O Polydorus, vengeance for thy wrongs  
 In that first slaughter of the barb'rous foe?'

Here interpos'd Dienece. Their hands  
 He grasp'd, and cordial transport thus express'd—

‘ O that Lycurgus from the shades might rise  
To praise the virtue which his laws inspire !’

Thus, till the dead of night, these heroes pass’d  
The hours in friendly converse, and enjoy’d  
Each other’s virtue. Happiest of men!  
At length, with gentle heaviness, the pow’r  
Of sleep invades their eyelids, and constrains  
Their magnanimity and zeal to rest;  
When, sliding down the hemisphere, the moon  
Immers’d in midnight shade her silver head.



# LEONIDAS.

BOOK II.

.

### THE ARGUMENT.

Leonidas, on his approach to the Isthmus, is met by the leaders of the troops sent from other Grecian states, and by the deputies who composed the Isthmian council. He harangues them; then proceeds, in conjunction with these forces, towards Thermopylæ. On the first day he is joined by Dithyrambus; on the third he reaches a valley in Locris, where he is entertained by Oïleus, the public host of the Lacedæmonian state; and the next morning is accompanied by him in a car to the temple of Pan: he finds Medon there, the son of Oïleus, and commander of two thousand Locrians, already posted at Thermopylæ, and by him is informed that the army of Xerxes is in sight of the pass.

# LEONIDAS.

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## BOOK II.

JUPITER spreads her purple beams around,  
When move the Spartans. Their approach is known.  
The Isthmian council, and the different chiefs  
To lead th' auxiliar bands, advance to meet  
Leonidas; Eupalamus the strong,  
Demæon, Clonius, Diophantus brave,  
And Hegesander. At their head is seen  
Protophanes, whom Mycenæ's ranks  
Revere; Mycenæ, once august in pow'r,  
In splendid wealth, and vaunting still the name  
Of Agamemnon. To Laconia's king  
The chieftain spake—' Leonidas, survey  
Mycenæ's race. Should ev'ry other Greek  
Be aw'd by Xerxes, and his eastern host,  
Believe not we can fear, deriv'd from those

Who once conducted o'er the foaming surge  
 The strength of Greece; who desert left the fields  
 Of ravag'd Asia, and her proudest walls  
 From their foundations levell'd to the ground.'

Leonidas replies not, but his voice  
 Directs to all—' Illustrious warriors, hail !  
 Who thus undaunted signalize your faith,  
 Your gen'rous ardour, in the common cause.  
 But you, whose counsels prop the Grecian state,  
 O venerable synod, who consign  
 To our protecting sword the gate of Greece,  
 Thrice hail ! Whate'er by valour we obtain,  
 Your wisdom must preserve. With piercing eyes  
 Contemplate ev'ry city, and discern  
 Their various tempers. Some, with partial care,  
 To guard their own, neglect the public, weal.  
 Unmov'd and cold are others. Terror here,  
 Corruption there, presides. O fire the brave  
 To gen'ral efforts in the gen'ral cause.  
 Confirm the wav'ring. Animate the cold,  
 The timid. Watch the faithless. Some betray  
 Themselves and Greece. Their perfidy prevent,

**Or call them back to honour. Let us all**  
**Be link'd in sacred union, and this land**  
**May face the world's whole multitude in arms.**  
**If for the spoil, by Paris borne to Troy,**  
**A thousand keels the Hellespont o'erspread,**  
**Shall not again confederated Greece**  
**Be rous'd to battle, and to freedom give**  
**What once she gave to fame? Behold, we haste**  
**To stop th' invading tyrant. Till we fall,**  
**He shall not pour his myriads on your plains.**  
**But, as the gods conceal how long our strength**  
**May stand unvanquish'd, or how soon may yield,**  
**Waste not a moment, till consenting Greece**  
**Range all her free-born numbers in the field.'**

**Leonidas concluded. Awful stept**  
**Before the sage assembly one, supreme**  
**And old in office, who address'd the king—**

**' Thy bright example ev'ry heart unites.**  
**From thee her happiest omens Greece derives**  
**Of concord, safety, liberty, and fame.**  
**Go then, O first of mortals, go, impress**



Amaze and terror on the barb'rous host;  
 The free-born Greeks instructing life to deem  
 Less dear than honour, and their country's cause.'

This heard, Leonidas, thy secret soul,  
 Exulting, tasted of the sweet reward  
 Due to thy name through endless time. Once more  
 His eyes he turn'd, and view'd in rapt'rous thought  
 His native land, which he alone can save;  
 Then summon'd all his majesty, and o'er  
 The Isthmus trod. The phalanx moves behind  
 In deep arrangement. So th' imperial ship,  
 With stately bulk, along the heaving tide,  
 In military pomp, conducts the pow'r  
 Of some proud navy, bounding from the port,  
 To bear the vengeance of a mighty state  
 Against a tyrant's walls. Till sultry noon  
 They march; when, halting as they take repast,  
 Across the plain before them they descry  
 A troop of Thespians. One above the rest  
 In eminence precedes. His glitt'ring shield,  
 Whose gold-embazon'd orb collects the beams  
 Cast by meridian Phœbus from his throne,

Flames like another sun. A snowy plume,  
 With wanton curls disporting in the breeze,  
 Floats o'er his dazzling casque. On nearer view,  
 Beneath the radiant honours of his crest,  
 A countenance of youth, in rosy prime  
 And manly sweetness, won the fix'd regard  
 Of each beholder. With a modest grace  
 He came, respectful, tow'rd the king, and shew'd  
 That all ideas of his own desert  
 Were sunk in veneration. So the god  
 Of light salutes his empyreal sire;  
 When from his altar, in th' embow'ring grove  
 Of palmy Delos, or the hallow'd bound  
 Of Tenedos, or Claros, where he hears  
 In hymns his praises from the sons of men,  
 He reascends the high Olympian seats:  
 Such reverential homage on his brow,  
 O'ershading, softens his effulgent bloom  
 With loveliness and grace. The king receives  
 Th' illustrious Thespian thus—' My willing tongue  
 Would style thee Dithyrambus. Thou dost bear  
 All in thy aspect to become that name,  
 Renown'd for worth and valour. O reveal

Thy birth, thy charge. Whoe'er thou art, my soul  
Desires to know thee, and would call thee friend.'

To him the youth—' O bulwark of our weal,  
My name is Dithyrambus; which the lips  
Of some benevolent, some gen'rous, friend  
To thee have sounded in a partial strain,  
And thou hast heard with favour. In thy sight  
I stand, deputed by the Thespian chief,  
The Theban, Locrian, by the fam'd in war,  
Diomedon, to hasten thy approach.  
Three days will bring the hostile pow'rs in view.'

He said. The ready standards are uprear'd.  
By zeal enforc'd, till ev'ning shadows fall  
The march continues; then by day-spring sweeps  
The earliest dews. The van, by Agis led,  
Displays the grisly face of battle, rough  
With spears, obliquely trail'd in dreadful length  
Along th' indented way. Beside him march'd  
His gallant Thespian host. The center boasts  
Leonidas, the leader, who retains  
The good Megistias near him. In the rear

Dieneces commanded, who in charge  
 Kept Menalippus, offspring of his friend,  
 For these instructions—‘ Let thine eye, young man,  
 Dwell on the order of our varying march;  
 As champaign, valley, mountain, or defile,  
 Require a change. The eastern tyrant thus  
 Conducts not his Barbarians, like the sands  
 In number. Yet the discipline of Greece  
 They will encounter, feeble as the sands  
 Dash’d on a rock, and scatter’d in their fall.’

To him th’ inquiring youth—‘ The martial tread,  
 The flute’s slow warble, both in just accord,  
 Entrance my senses; but let wonder ask,  
 Why is that tender vehicle of sound  
 Preferr’d in war by Sparta? Other Greeks  
 To more sonorous music rush in fight.’

‘ Son of my friend,’ Dieneces rejoins,  
 ‘ Well dost thou note. I praise thee. Sparta’s law  
 With human passions, source of human woes,  
 Maintains perpetual strife. She sternly curbs  
 Our infant hearts, till passion yields its seat

To principle and order. Music too,  
 By Spartans lov'd, is temper'd by the law;  
 Still to her plan subservient, melts in notes  
 Which cool and sooth, not irritate and warm.  
 Thus, by habitual abstinence apply'd  
 To ev'ry sense, suppressing nature's fire  
 By modes of duty, not by ardour sway'd,  
 O'er each impetuous enemy abroad,  
 At home o'er vice and pleasure we prevail.'

‘ O might I merit a Laconian name!  
 The Acarnanian answer'd—‘ But explain  
 What is the land we traverse? What the hill,  
 Whose parted summit in a spacious void  
 Admits a bed of clouds? And, gracious, tell  
 Whose are those suits of armour which I see  
 Borne by two Helots?’ At the questions pleas'd,  
 Dienes continues—‘ Those belong  
 To Alpheus and his brother. Light of foot,  
 They, disencumber'd, all at large precede  
 This pond'rous band. They guide a troop of slaves,  
 Our missile-weapon'd Helots, to observe,  
 Provide, forewarn, and obstacles remove.

This tract is Phocis. That divided hill  
 Is fam'd Parnassus. Thence the voice divine  
 Was sent by Phœbus, summoning to death  
 The king of Sparta. From his fruitful blood  
 A crop will spring of victory to Greece.'

' And these three hundred, high in birth and rank,  
 All citizens of Sparta'—cries the youth.  
 ' They all must bleed,' Dieneces subjoins,  
 ' All, with their leader: so the law decrees.'

To him, with earnest looks, the gen'rous youth—  
 ' Wilt thou not place me in that glorious hour  
 Close to thy buckler? Gratitude will brace  
 Thy pupil's arm to manifest the force  
 Of thy instruction.' ' Menalippus, no,'  
 Return'd the chief; ' Not thou of Spartan breed,  
 Nor call'd to perish. Thou, unwedded too,  
 Wouldst leave no race behind thee. Live to praise,  
 Live to enjoy, our solitary fall.  
 Reply is needless. See, the sun descends.  
 The army halts. I trust thee with a charge,  
 Son of Megistias. In my name command

Th' attendant Helots to erect our camp.  
 We pitch our tents in Locris.' Quick the youth  
 His charge accomplish'd. From a gen'rous meal,  
 Where, at the call of Alpheus, Locris show'r'd  
 Her Amalthean plenty on her friends,  
 The sated warriors soon in slumber lose  
 The memory of toil. His watchful round  
 Dieneces, with Menalippus, takes.

The moon rode high and clear. Her light benign  
 To their pleas'd eyes a rural dwelling shew'd,  
 All unadorn'd, but seemly. Either side  
 Was fenc'd by trees high shadowing. The front  
 Look'd on a crystal pool, by feather'd tribes  
 At ev'ry dawn frequented. From the springs  
 A small redundance fed a shallow brook,  
 O'er smoothest pebbles rippling, just to wake,  
 Not startle, silence, and the ear of night  
 Entice to listen undisturb'd. Around  
 The grass was cover'd by reposing sheep,  
 Whose drowsy guard no longer bay'd the moon.

The warriors stopp'd, contemplating the seat  
 Of rural quiet. Suddenly a swain

Steps forth. His fingers touch the breathing reed.  
 Uprise the fleecy train. Each faithful dog  
 Is rous'd. All, heedful of the wonted sound,  
 Their known conductor follow. Slow behind  
 Th' observing warriors move. Ere long they reach  
 A broad and verdant circle, thick enclos'd  
 With birches straight and tall, whose glossy rind  
 Is clad in silver from Diana's car.  
 The ground was holy, and the central spot  
 An altar bore to Pan. Beyond the orb  
 Of skreening trees, th' external circuit swarm'd  
 With sheep and beeves, each neighb'ring hamlet's wealth  
 Collected. Thither soon the swain arriv'd,  
 Whom, by the name of Melibæus hail'd,  
 A peasant throng surrounded. As their chief,  
 He, nigh the altar, to his rural friends  
 Address'd these words. ' O, sent from diff'rent lords  
 With contribution to the public wants,  
 Time presses. God of peasants, bless our course!  
 Speed to the slow-pac'd ox for once impart;  
 That o'er these vallies, cool'd by dewy night,  
 We, to our summons true, ere noontide blaze,  
 May join Oileus, and his praise obtain!'



He ceas'd. To rustic madrigals and pipes,  
 Combin'd with bleating notes and tinkling bells,  
 With clamour shrill from busy tongues of dogs,  
 Or hollow-sounding from the deep-mouth'd ox,  
 Along the valley, herd and flock are driv'n  
 Successive; halting oft to harmless spoil  
 Of flow'rs and herbage, springing in their sight.  
 While Melibœus marshall'd with address  
 The inoffensive host, unseen in shades,  
 Dienece applauded, and the youth  
 Of Menalippus caution'd. ' Let no word  
 Impede the careful peasant. On his charge  
 Depends our welfare. Diligent and staid,  
 He suits his godlike master. Thou wilt see  
 That righteous hero soon. Now sleep demands  
 Our debt to nature. On a carpet dry  
 Of moss, beneath a wholesome beech, they lay,  
 Arm'd as they were. Their slumber, short, retires  
 With night's last shadow. At their warning rous'd,  
 The troops proceed. Th' admiring eye of youth  
 In Menalippus caught the morning rays,  
 To guide its travel o'er the landscape wide  
 Of cultivated hillocks, dales, and lawns;

Where mansions, hamlets, interpos'd; where domes  
 lose to their gods, through consecrated shades.  
 He then exclaims. 'O say, can Jove devote  
 These fields to ravage, those abodes to flames?'

The Spartan answers. 'Ravage, sword, and fire,  
 Must be endur'd, as incidental ills.  
 Suffice it these invaders, soon or late,  
 Will leave this soil more fertile by their blood,  
 With spoils abundant to rebuild the fanes.  
 Precarious benefits are these, thou seest,  
 So fram'd by heav'n; but virtue is a good  
 No foe can spoil, and lasting to the grave.'

Beside the public way, an oval fount  
 Of marble sparkled with a silver spray  
 Of falling rills, collected from above.  
 The army halted, and their hollow casques  
 Dipp'd in the limpid stream. Behind it rose  
 An edifice, compos'd of native roots,  
 And oaken trunks, of knotted girth unwrought.  
 Within were beds of moss. Old, batter'd, arms  
 Hung from the roof. The curious chiefs approach.

These words, engraven on a tablet rude,  
 Megistias reads; the rest in silence hear.  
 ' Yon marble fountain, by Oileus plac'd,  
 To thirsty lips in living water flows;  
 For weary steps he fram'd this cool retreat;  
 A grateful off'ring here to rural peace,  
 His dinted shield, his helmet, he resign'd.  
 O passenger, if, born to noble deeds,  
 Thou wouldst obtain perpetual grace from Jove,  
 Devote thy vigour to heroic toils,  
 And thy decline to hospitable cares.  
 Rest here; then seek Oileus in his vale.'

' O Jove,' burst forth Leonidas, ' thy grace  
 Is large and various. Length of days and bliss  
 To him thou giv'st, to me a shorten'd term,  
 Nor yet less happy. Grateful, we confess  
 Thy diff'rent bounties, measur'd full to both.  
 Come, let us seek Oileus in his vale.'

The word is giv'n. The heavy phalanx moves.  
 The light pac'd Helots long, ere morning dawn'd,  
 Had recommenc'd their progress. They o'ertook

e Melibœus in a spacious vale,  
 fruitfullest in Locris, ere the sun  
 forth his noontide beams. On either side  
 rface scarce perceptibly ascends.  
 riant vegetation crowds the soil  
 i trees close rang'd and mingling. Rich the loads  
 ative fruitage to the sight reveal  
 r vig'rous nurture. There the flushing peach,  
 apple, citron, almond, pear, and date,  
 :granates, purple mulberry, and fig,  
 i interlacing branches mix their hues  
 scents, the passenger's delight ; but leave  
 e mid vale a pasture long and large,  
 erant in vivid verdure, cropp'd  
 erds, by flocks, innum'rous. Neighb'ring knolls  
 speckled o'er with cots, whose humble roofs  
 erdsmen, shepherds, and laborious hinds,  
 : yielded rest unbroken, till the name  
 :erxes shook their quiet. Yet this day  
 festive. Swains and damsels, youth and age,  
 i toil, from home enlarg'd, disporting, fill'd  
 enliv'n'd meadow. Under ev'ry shade  
 ary minstrel sat ; the maidens danc'd ;

Flocks bleated; oxen low'd; the horses neigh'd;  
 With joy the vale resounded; terror fled;  
 Leonidas was nigh. The welcome news  
 By Melibœus, hast'ning to his lord,  
 Was loudly told. The Helots too appear'd.  
 While with his brother Alpheus thus discours'd—

‘ In this fair valley old Oileus dwells,  
 The first of Locrians, of Laconia's state  
 The public host. Yon large pavilions mark.  
 They promise welcome. Thither let us bend,  
 There tell our charge.’ This said, they both advance.  
 A hoary band receives them. One, who seem'd  
 In rank, in age, superior, wav'd his hand  
 To Melibœus, standing near, and spake—

‘ By this my faithful messenger I learn  
 That you are friends. Nor yet th' invader's foot  
 Hath pass'd our confines. Else, o'ercast by time,  
 My sight would scarce distinguish friend or foe,  
 A Grecian or Barbarian.’ Alpheus then—

‘ We come from Lacedæmon, of our king

Leonidas forerunners.' 'Is he nigh?'  
 The cordial senior tenderly exclaims—  
 'I am Oileus. Him a beardless boy  
 I knew in Lacedæmon. Twenty years  
 Are since elaps'd. He scarce remembers me.  
 But I will feast him, as becomes my zeal,  
 Him and his army. You, my friends, repose.'

They sit. He still discourses—'Spartan guests,  
 In me an aged soldier you behold.  
 From Ajax, fam'd in Agamemnon's war,  
 Oilean Ajax, flows my vital stream,  
 Unmix'd with his presumption. I have borne  
 The highest functions in the Locrian state,  
 Not with dishonour. Self-dismiss'd, my age  
 Hath in this valley on my own demesne  
 Liv'd tranquil, not recluse. My comrades these,  
 Old magistrates and warriors, like myself,  
 Releas'd from public care, with me retir'd  
 To rural quiet. Through our last remains  
 Of time in sweet garrulity we slide,  
 Recounting pass'd achievements of our prime;  
 Nor wanting lib'ral means for lib'ral deeds;

Here bless'd, here blessing, we reside. These flocks,  
 These herds and pastures, these our num'rous hinds,  
 And poverty hence exil'd, may divulge  
 Our generous abundance. We can spread  
 A banquet for an army. By the state  
 Once more entreated, we accept a charge,  
 To age well suited. By our watchful care  
 The goddess Plenty in your tents shall dwell.'

He scarce had finish'd when the ensigns broad  
 Of Lacedæmon's phalanx down the vale  
 Were seen to wave, unfolding at the sound  
 Of flutes, soft warbling in th' expressive mood  
 Of Dorian sweetness, unadorn'd. Around,  
 In notes of welcome, ev'ry shepherd tun'd  
 His sprightly reed. The damsels shew'd their hair,  
 Diversify'd with flowrets. Garlands gay,  
 Rush-woven baskets, glowing with the dyes  
 Of amaranths, of jasmin, roses, pinks,  
 And violets, they carry, tripping light  
 Before the steps of grimly-featur'd Mars,  
 To blend the smiles of Flora with his frown.  
 Leonidas they chant in silvan lays,

Him the defender of their meads and groves,  
 Him, more than Pan, a guardian to their flocks.  
 While Philomela, in her poplar shade,  
 Awaken'd, strains her emulating throat,  
 And joins, with liquid trills, the swelling sounds.

Behold, Oïleus and his ancient train  
 Accost Laconia's king, whose looks and words  
 Confess remembrance of the Locrian chief.

‘ Thrice hail, Oïleus, Sparta's noble host!  
 Thou art of old acquainted with her sons,  
 Their laws, their manners. Musical as brave,  
 Train'd to delight, in smooth Terpander's lay,  
 In Alcman's Dorian measure, we enjoy,  
 In thy melodious vale, th' unlabour'd strains  
 Of rural pipes, to nightingales attun'd.  
 Our heart-felt gladness deems the golden age  
 Subsisting where thou govern'st. Still these tones  
 Of joy continu'd may thy dwellings hear!  
 Still may this plenty, unmolested, crown  
 The favour'd district! May thy reverend dust  
 Have peaceful shelter in thy father's tomb!  
 Kind heav'n, that merit to my sword impart!’



By joy uplifted, forth Oileus broke—  
 ‘Thou dost recall me then! O, sent to guard  
 These fruits from spoil, these hoary locks from shame,  
 Permit thy weary’d soldiers to partake  
 Of Locrian plenty. Enter thou my tents,  
 Thou and thy captains. I salute them all.’

The hero, full of dignity and years,  
 Once bold in action, placed now in ease,  
 Ev’n by his look, benignly cast around,  
 Gives lassitude relief. With native grace,  
 With heart-effus’d complacency, the king  
 Accepts the lib’ral welcome; while his troops,  
 To relaxation and repast dismiss’d,  
 Pitch on the wounded green their bristling spears.

Still is the ev’ning. Under chesnut shades,  
 With interweaving poplars, spacious stands  
 A well-fram’d tent. There calm the heroes sit,  
 The genial board enjoy, and feast the mind  
 On sage discourse; which thus Oileus clos’d—

‘Behold, night lifts her signal, to invoke

That friendly god who owns the drowsy wand.  
 To Mercury this last libation flows.  
 Farewell till morn.' They separate, they sleep;  
 All but Oileus, who forsakes the tent.  
 On Melibœus in these words he calls—  
 'Approach, my faithful friend.' To him the swain—  
 'Thy bondman hears thy call.' The chief replies  
 Loud, for the gath'ring peasantry to heed—

'Come, Melibœus, it is surely time  
 That my repeated gift, the name of friend,  
 Thou shouldst accept. The name of bondman wounds  
 My ear. Be free. No longer, best of men,  
 Reject that boon; nor let my feeble head,  
 To thee a debtor, as to gracious heav'n,  
 Descend and sleep unthankful in the grave.  
 Though yielding nature daily feels decay,  
 Thou dost prevent all care. The gods estrange  
 Pain from my pillow, have secur'd my breast  
 From weeds, too oft in aged soils profuse,  
 From self-tormenting petulance and pride,  
 From jealousy and envy at the fame  
 Of younger men. Leonidas will dim

My former lustre, as that silver orb  
Outshines the meanest star; and I rejoice.  
O Melibœus, these elect of Jove  
To certain death advance. Immortal pow'rs!  
How social, how endearing is their speech!  
How flow in lib'ral cheerfulness their hearts!  
To such a period verging, men like these  
Age well may envy, and that envy take  
The genuine shape of virtue. Let their span  
Of earthly being, while it lasts, contain  
Each earthly joy. Till bless'd Elysium spread  
Her ever-blooming, inexhausted stores  
To their glad sight, be mine the grateful task  
To drain my plenty. From the vaulted caves  
Our vessels large of well-fermented wine,  
From all our gran'ries lift the treasur'd corn.  
Go, load the groaning axles. Nor forget  
With garments new to greet Melissa's nymphs.  
To her a triple change of vestments bear,  
With twenty lambs and twenty speckled kids.  
Be it your care, my peasants, some to aid  
Him, your director, others to select  
Five hundred oxen, thrice a thousand sheep,

Of lusty swains a thousand. Let the morn,  
When first she blushes, see my will perform'd.'

They heard. Their lord's injunctions to fulfil  
Was their ambition. He, unresting, mounts  
A ready car. The coursers had enroll'd  
His name in Isthmian and Nemean games.  
By moon-light, floating on the splendid reins,  
He, o'er the busy vale intent, is borne  
From place to place; o'erlooks, directs, forgets  
That he is old. Meantime the shades of night,  
Retiring, wake Dienece. He gives  
The word. His pupil seconds. Ev'ry band  
Is arm'd. Day opens. Sparta's king appears.  
Oileus greets him. In his radiant car  
The senior stays, reluctant; but his guest  
So wills, in Spartan reverence to age.  
Then spake the Locrian. 'To assist thy camp  
A chosen band of peasants I detach.  
I trust thy valour. Doubt not thou my care;  
Nor doubt that swain.' Oileus, speaking, look'd  
On Melibœus. Skilful he commands  
These hinds. 'Him wise, him faithful, I have prov'd,

More than Eumæus to Laertes' son.  
 To him th' Oetæan woods, their devious tracks,  
 Are known, each rill and fountain. Near the pass  
 Two thousand Locrians wilt thou find encamp'd,  
 My eldest born their leader, Medon nam'd,  
 Well exercis'd in arms. My daughter dwells  
 On Oeta. Sage Melissa she is call'd,  
 Enlighten'd priestess of the tuneful nine.  
 She haply may accost thee. Thou wilt lend  
 An ear. Not fruitless are Melissa's words.  
 Now, servants, bring the sacred wine.' Obey'd,  
 He, from his seat uprising, thus proceeds—

‘ Lo! from this chalice a libation pure  
 To Mars, to Grecian liberty and laws,  
 To their protector, eleutherian Jove,  
 To his nine daughters, who record the brave,  
 To thy renown, Leonidas, I pour;  
 And take an old man's benediction too.’

He stopt. Affection, struggling in his heart,  
 Burst forth again—‘ Illustrious guest, afford  
 Another hour! That slender space of time

Yield to my sole possession. While the troops,  
 Already glitt'ring down the dewy vale,  
 File through its narrow'd outlet, near my side  
 Deign to be carry'd, and my talk endure.'

The king, well pleas'd, ascends. Slow move the steeds  
 Behind the rear. Oileus grasps his hand,  
 Then, in the fulness of his soul, pursues—

‘ Thy veneration for Laconia's laws  
 That I may strengthen, may to rapture warm,  
 Hear me display the melancholy fruits  
 Of lawless will. When o'er the Lydian plains  
 Th' innumerable tents of Xerxes spread,  
 His vassal, Pythius, who in affluent means  
 Surpasses me, as that Barbarian prince  
 Thou dost in virtue, entertain'd the host,  
 And proffer'd all his treasures. These the king  
 Refusing, ev'n augmented from his own.  
 An act of fancy, not habitual grace,  
 A sparkling vapour through the regal gloom  
 Of cruelty and pride. He now prepar'd  
 To march from Sardis, when with humble tears

The good old man besought him—" Let the king,  
 Propitious, hear a parent! In thy train  
 I have five sons. Ah! leave my eldest born,  
 Thy future vassal, to sustain my age!  
 The tyrant fell reply'd—' Presumptuous man,  
 Who art my slave, in this tremendous war  
 Is not my person hazarded, my race,  
 My consort? Former merit saves from death  
 Four of thy offspring. Him, so dearly priz'd,  
 Thy folly hath destroy'd.' His body straight  
 Was hewn asunder. By the public way  
 On either side a bleeding half was cast,  
 And millions pass'd between. O, Spartan king,  
 Taught to revere the sanctity of laws,  
 The acts of Xerxes with thy own compare,  
 His fame with thine. The curses of mankind  
 Give him renown. He marches to destroy,  
 But thou to save. Behold the trees are bent,  
 Each eminence is loaded thick with crowds,  
 From cots, from ev'ry hamlet pour'd abroad,  
 To bless thy steps, to celebrate thy praise.'

Ofttimes the king his decent brow inclin'd,

Mute and obsequious to an elder's voice,  
 Which through th' instructed ear unceasing flow'd,  
 In eloquence and knowledge. Scarce an hour  
 Was fled. The narrow dale was left behind.  
 A causeway broad disclos'd an ancient pile  
 Of military fame. A trophy large,  
 Compact with crested morions, targets rude,  
 With spears and corselets, dimm'd by eating age,  
 Stood near a lake pellucid, smooth, profound,  
 Of circular expanse; whose bosom shew'd  
 A green-slop'd island, figur'd o'er with flow'rs,  
 And from its centre lifting high to view  
 A marble chapel, on the massy strength  
 Of Doric columns rais'd. A full-wrought frieze  
 Display'd the sculptor's art. In solemn pomp  
 Of obelisks, and busts, and story'd urns,  
 Sepulchral mansions of illustrious dead  
 Were scatter'd round, o'ercast with shadows black  
 Of yew and cypress. In a serious note  
 Oileus, pointing, opens new discourse—

' Beneath yon turf my ancestors repose.  
 Oilean Ajax singly was depriv'd



Of fun'ral honours there. With impious lust  
 He stain'd Minerva's temple. From the gulph  
 Of briny waters by their god preserv'd,  
 That god he brav'd. He lies beneath a rock,  
 By Neptune's trident in his wrath o'eturn'd.  
 Shut from Elysium for a hundred years,  
 The hero's ghost bewail'd his oozy tomb.  
 A race more pious on th' Oïlean house  
 Felicity have drawn. To ev'ry god  
 I owe my bliss, my early fame to Pan.  
 Once, on the margin of that silent pool,  
 In their nocturnal camp, Barbarians lay,  
 Awaiting morn to violate the dead.  
 My youth was fir'd. I summon'd, from their cots,  
 A rustic host. We sacrific'd to Pan,  
 Assail'd th' unguarded ruffians in his name.  
 He with his terrors smote their yielding hearts.  
 Not one surviv'd the fury of our swains.  
 Rich was the pillage. Hence that trophy rose,  
 Of costly blocks constructed; hence that fane,  
 Inscrib'd to Pan th' armipotent. O king,  
 Be to an old man's vanity benign.  
 This frowning emblem of terrific war

Proclaims the ardour and exploits of youth.  
 This, to Barbarian strangers ent'ring Greece,  
 Shews what I was. The marble fount thou saw'st  
 Of living water, whose transparent flow  
 Reliev'd thy march in yester sultry sun,  
 The cell, which offer'd rest on beds of moss,  
 Shew what I am; to Grecian neighbours shew  
 The hospitality of age. O age,  
 Where are thy graces, but in lib'ral deeds,  
 In bland deportment? Would thy furrow'd cheeks  
 Lose the deformity of time? Let smiles  
 Dwell in thy wrinkles. Then, rever'd by youth,  
 Thy feeble steps will find'. . . Abruptly here  
 He paus'd. A manly warrior, full in sight,  
 Beside the trophy on his target lean'd,  
 Unknown to Sparta's leader, who address'd  
 His rev'rend host—' Thou pausest. Let me ask,  
 Whom do I see, resembling in his form  
 A demigod?' In transport then the sage—

‘ It is my son, discover'd by his shield,  
 Thy brave auxiliar, Medon! He sustains  
 My ancient honours in his native state,

Which kindly chose my offspring to replace  
 Their long-sequester'd chief. Heart-winning guest!  
 My life, a tide of joy, which never knew  
 A painful ebb, beyond its wonted mark  
 Flows in thy converse. Could a wish prevail,  
 My long and happy course should finish here.'

The chariot rested. Medon now approach'd,  
 Saluting thus Leonidas—' O king  
 Of warlike Sparta, Xerxes' host in sight  
 Begin to spread their multitude, and fill  
 The spacious Malian plain.' The king replies—

' Accept, illustrious messenger, my thanks.  
 With such a brave assistant, as the son  
 Of great Oïleus, more assur'd I go  
 To face those numbers.' With his godlike friend  
 The father, now dismounting from his car,  
 Embraces Medon. In a sliding bark  
 They all are wafted to the island fane,  
 Erected by Oïleus, and enrich'd  
 With his engrav'd achievements. Thence the eye  
 Of Sparta's gen'ral, in extensive scope,

Contemplates each battalion as they wind  
 Along the pool; whose limpid face reflects  
 Their weapons, glist'ning in the early sun.  
 Them he to Pan armipotent commends,  
 His favour thus invoking—' God, whose pow'r,  
 By rumour vain, or echo's empty voice,  
 Can sink the valiant in desponding fear,  
 Can disarray whole armies, smile on these  
 Thy worshippers! Thy own Arcadians guard!  
 Through thee Oileus triumph'd. On his son,  
 On me, look down: Our shields auxiliar join  
 Against profane Barbarians, who insult  
 The Grecian gods, and meditate the fall  
 Of this thy shrine.' He said, and now, intent  
 To leave the island, on Oileus call'd.

' He,' Medon answer'd, ' by his joy and zeal  
 Too high transported, and discoursing long,  
 Felt on his drowsy lids a balmy down  
 Of heaviness descending. He, unmark'd  
 Amid thy pious commerce with the god,  
 Was silently remov'd. The good old chief  
 On carpets, rais'd by tender, menial hands,  
 Calm in the secret sanctuary is laid.'

His hast'ning step Leonidas restrains;  
Thus fervent prays—' O Maia's son, best pleas'd  
When calling slumber to a virtuous eye,  
Watch o'er my venerable friend! Thy balm  
He wants, exhausted by his love to me.  
Sweet sleep, thou soft'nest that intruding pang  
Which gen'rous breasts, so parting, must admit.'

He said, embark'd, relanded. To his side  
Inviting Medon, he rejoin'd the host.

# LEONIDAS.

BOOK III.

## THE ARGUMENT.

Leonidas arrives at Thermopylæ about noon, on the fourth day after his departure from the Isthmus. He is received by Demophilus, the commander of Thespia, and by Anaxander the Theban, treacherously recommending Epialtes, a Malian, who seeks, by a pompous description of the Persian power, to intimidate the Grecian leaders as they are viewing the enemy's camp from the top of mount Oeta. He is answered by Dieneces and Diomedon. Xerxes sends Tigranes and Phraortes to the Grecian camp, who are dismissed by Leonidas, and conducted back by Dithyrambus and Diomedon; which last, incensed at the arrogance of Tygranes, treats him with contempt and menaces. This occasions a challenge to single combat between Diomedon and Tigranes, Dithyrambus and Phraortes. Epialtes, after a conference with Anaxander, declares his intention of returning to Xerxes. Leonidas dispatches Agis with Melibœus, a faithful slave of Oileus, and high in the estimation of his lord, to view a body of Phocians, who had been posted at a distance from Thermopylæ for the defence of another pass in mount Oeta.

# LEONIDAS.

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## BOOK III.

Now in the van Leonidas appears,  
With Medon still conferring. 'Hast thou heard,'  
He said, 'among th' innumerable foes  
What chiefs are most distinguish'd?' 'Might we trust  
To fame,' reply'd the Locrian, 'Xerxes boasts  
His ablest, bravest, counsellor and chief,  
In Artemisia, Caria's matchless queen.  
To old Darius benefits had bound  
Her lord, herself to Xerxes. Not compell'd,  
Except by magnanimity, she leads  
The best appointed squadron of his fleet.  
No female softness Artemisia knows,  
But in maternal love. Her widow'd hand  
With equity and firmness for her son  
Administers the sway. Of Doric race



She still retains the spirit, which from Greece  
 Her ancestors transplanted. Other chiefs  
 Are all Barbarians, little known to fame,  
 Save one, whom Sparta hath herself supply'd,  
 Not less than Demaratus, once her king,  
 An exile now.' Leonidas rejoins—

' Son of Oileus, like thy father wise,  
 Like him partake my confidence. Thy words  
 Recall an æra, sadd'ning all my thoughts.  
 That injur'd Spartan shar'd the regal sway  
 With one—Alas! my brother, eldest born,  
 Unbless'd by nature, favour'd by no god,  
 Cleomenes! Insanity of mind,  
 Malignant passions, impious acts, deform'd  
 A life concluded by his own fell hand.  
 Against his colleague, envious, he suborn'd  
 Leutychides. Him perjury and fraud  
 Plac'd on the seat, by Demaratus held  
 Unstain'd in lustre.' Here Oileus' son—

' My future service only can repay  
 Thy confidential friendship. Let us close

The gloomy theme. Thermopylæ is nigh.  
 Each face in transport glows. Now Oeta rear'd  
 His tow'ring forehead. With impatient steps  
 On rush'd the phalanx, sounding pæans high;  
 As if the present deity of fame  
 Had from the summit shewn her dazzling form,  
 With wreaths unfading on her temples bound,  
 Her adamant trumpet in her hand,  
 To celebrate their valour. From the van  
 Leonidas advances, like the sun,  
 When through dividing clouds his presence stays  
 Their sweeping rack, and stills the clam'rous wind.  
 The army silent halt. Their ensigns fan  
 The air no longer. Motionless their spears.  
 His eye reveals the ardour of his soul,  
 Which thus finds utterance from his eager lips—

' All hail, Thermopylæ, and you, the pow'rs  
 Presiding here! All hail, ye silvan gods,  
 Ye fountain nymphs, who send your lucid rills  
 In broken murmurs down the rugged steep!  
 Receive us, O benignant, and support  
 The cause of Greece! Conceal the secret paths

Which o'er these crags, and through these forests, wind,  
 Untrod by human feet, and trac'd alone  
 By your immortal footsteps! O defend  
 Your own recesses, nor let impious war  
 Profane the solemn silence of your groves!  
 Then on your hills your praises shall you hear  
 From those, whose deeds shall tell th' approving world  
 That not to undeservers did ye grant  
 Your high protection. You, my valiant friends,  
 Now rouse the gen'rous spirit which inflames  
 Your hearts; exert the vigour of your arms;  
 That in the bosoms of the brave and free  
 Your memorable actions may survive;  
 May sound delightful in the ear of time,  
 Long as blue Neptune beats the Malian strand,  
 Or those tall cliffs erect their shaggy tops  
 So near to heav'n, your monuments of fame!

As in some torrid region, where the head  
 Of Ceres bends beneath her golden load,  
 If from a burning brand a scatter'd spark  
 Invade the parching ground, a sudden blaze  
 Sweeps o'er the crackling champaign; through his host,

Not with less swiftness, to the furthest ranks  
 The words of great Leonidas diffus'd  
 A more than mortal fervour. Ev'ry heart  
 Distends with thoughts of glory, such as raise  
 The patriot's virtue, and the soldier's fire,  
 When danger, most tremendous in his form,  
 Seems in their sight most lovely. On their minds  
 Imagination pictures all the scenes  
 Of war; the purple field, the heaps of dead,  
 The glitt'ring trophy, pil'd with Persian arms.

But lo! the Grecian leaders, who before  
 Were station'd near Thermopylæ, salute  
 Laconia's king. The Thespian chief, ally'd  
 To Dithyrambus, first the silence breaks;  
 An ancient warrior. From behind his casque,  
 Whose crested weight his aged temples bore,  
 The slender hairs, all silver'd o'er by time,  
 Flow'd venerably down. He thus began—

' Joy now shall crown the period of my days;  
 And whether nigh my father's urn I sleep,  
 Or, slain by Persia's sword, embrace the earth,

Our common parent, be it as the gods  
 Shall best determine. For the present hour  
 I bless their bounty, which hath giv'n my age  
 To see the brave Leonidas, and bid  
 That hero welcome on this glorious shore,  
 To fix the basis of the Grecian weal.'

Here too the crafty Anaxander spake—  
 'Of all the Thebans, we, rejoicing, hail  
 The king of Sparta. We obey'd his call.  
 O may oblivion o'er the shame of Thebes  
 A dark'ning veil extend! or those alone  
 By fame be curs'd, whose impious counsels turn  
 Their countrymen from virtue! Thebes was sunk,  
 Her glory bury'd in dishonest sloth.  
 To wake her languor gen'rous Alpheus came,  
 The messenger of freedom. O accept  
 Our grateful hearts! Thou, Alpheus, art the cause  
 That Anaxander from his native gates  
 Not single joins this host; nor tamely these,  
 My chosen friends, behind their walls remain.  
 Enough of words. Time presses. Mount, ye chiefs,  
 This loftiest part of Oeta. This o'erlooks

The straits, and far beyond their northern mouth  
Extends our sight across the Malian plain.  
Behold a native, Epialtes call'd,  
Who with the foe from Thracia's bounds hath march'd.'

Disguis'd in seeming worth, he ended here.  
The camp not long had Epialtes reach'd,  
By race a Malian. Eloquent his tongue,  
His heart was false and abject. He was skill'd  
To grace perfidious counsels, and to clothe  
In swelling phrase the baseness of his soul,  
Foul nurse of treasons. To the tents of Greece,  
Himself a Greek, a faithless spy he came.  
Soon to the friends of Xerxes he repair'd,  
The Theban chiefs, and nightly councils held  
How to betray the Spartans, or deject  
By consternation. Up the arduous slope  
With him each leader to the summit climbs.  
Thence a tremendous prospect they command,  
Where endless plains, by white pavilions hid,  
Spread like the vast Atlantïc, when no shore,  
No rock, no promontory, stops the sight,  
Unbounded, as it wanders; while the moon,

Resplendent eye of night, in fullest orb  
 Surveys th' interminate expanse, and throws  
 Her rays abroad, to deck in snowy light  
 The dancing billows. Such was Xerxes' camp;  
 A pow'r unrivall'd by the mightiest king,  
 Or fiercest conqu'ror, whose blood-thirsty pride,  
 Dissolving all the sacred ties which bind  
 The happiness of nations, hath upcall'd  
 The sleeping fury, Discord, from her den.  
 Not from the hundred brazen gates of Thebes,  
 The tow'rs of Memphis, and those pregnant fields,  
 Enrich'd by kindly Nile, such armies swarm'd  
 Around Sesostris; who with trophies fill'd  
 The vanquish'd east; who o'er the rapid foam  
 Of distant Tanais, o'er the surface broad  
 Of Ganges, sent his formidable name.  
 Nor yet in Asia's far extended bounds  
 E'er met such numbers; not when Ninus led  
 Th' Assyrian race to conquest. Not the gates  
 Of Babylon along Euphrates pour'd  
 Such myriads arm'd; when, emptying all her streets,  
 The rage of dire Semiramis they bore  
 Beyond the Indus; there defeated, left  
 His blood-stain'd current turbid with their dead.

Yet of the chiefs, contemplating this scene,  
 Not one is shaken. Undismay'd they stand;  
 Th' immeasurable camp with fearless eyes  
 They traverse; while, in meditation, near  
 The treach'rous Malian waits, collecting all  
 His pomp of words to paint the hostile pow'r;  
 Nor yet with falsehood arms his fraudulent tongue  
 To feign a tale of terror. Truth, herself,  
 Beyond the reach of fiction to enhance,  
 Now aids his treason, and with cold dismay  
 Might pierce the boldest heart, unless secur'd  
 By dauntless virtue, which disdains to live  
 From liberty divorc'd. Requested soon,  
 He breaks his artful silence. ' Greeks and friends,  
 Can I behold my native Malian fields,  
 Presenting hostile millions to your sight,  
 And not in grief suppress the horrid tale  
 Which you exact from these ill-omen'd lips?  
 On Thracia's sea-beat verge I watch'd the foes;  
 Where, joining Europe to the Asian strand,  
 A mighty bridge restrain'd th' outrageous waves,  
 And stemm'd th' impetuous current; while in arms  
 The universal progeny of men



Seem'd trampling o'er the subjugated flood  
 By thousands, by ten thousands. Persians, Medes,  
 Assyrians, Saces, Indians, swarthy files  
 From Æthiopia, Egypt's tawny sons,  
 Arabians, Bactrians, Parthians, all the strength  
 Of Asia and of Libya. Neptune groan'd  
 Beneath their number, and, indignant, heav'd  
 His neck against th' incumbent weight. In vain  
 The violence of Eurus and the North,  
 With rag'd combin'd, against th' unyielding pile  
 Dash'd half the Hellespont. The eastern world  
 Sev'n days and nights uninterrupted pass  
 To cover Thracia's regions. They accept  
 A Persian lord. They range their hardy race  
 Beneath his standards. Macedonia's youth,  
 The brave Thessalian horse, with ev'ry Greek  
 Who dwells beyond Thermopylæ, attend,  
 Assist a foreign tyrant. Sire of gods,  
 Who in a moment, by thy will supreme,  
 Canst quell the mighty in their proudest hopes,  
 Canst raise the weak to safety, oh impart  
 Thy instant succour! Interpose thy arm!  
 With lightning blast their standards! Oh, confound,

With triple-bolted thunder, Asia's tents,  
 Whence rushing millions by the morn will pour  
 An inundation to o'erwhelm the Greeks!  
 Resistance else were vain against a host  
 Which overspreads Thessalia. Far beyond  
 That Malian champaign, stretching wide below,  
 Beyond the utmost measure of the sight  
 From this aspiring cliff, the hostile camp  
 Contains yet mightier numbers; who have drain'd  
 The beds of copious rivers with their thirst;  
 Who with their arrows hide the mid-day sun.'

' Then we shall give them battle in the shade,'  
 Dieneses reply'd. Not calmly thus  
 Diomedon. On Persia's camp he bent  
 His low'ring brow, which frowns had furrow'd o'er,  
 Then fierce exclaim'd—' Bellona, turn, and view  
 With joyful eyes that field, the fatal stage  
 By regal madness for thy rage prepar'd  
 To exercise its horrors! Whet thy teeth,  
 Voracious death! All Asia is thy prey.  
 Contagion, famine, and the Grecian sword,  
 For thy insatiate hunger will provide

Variety of carnage.' He concludes;  
 While on the host immense his cloudy brow  
 Is fix'd, disdainful, and their strength defies.

Meantime an eastern herald down the pass  
 Was seen, slow-moving tow'rds the Phocian wall.  
 From Asia's monarch delegated, came  
 Tygranes and Phraortes. From the hill  
 Leonidas conducts th' impatient chiefs.  
 By them environ'd, in his tent he sits;  
 Where thus Tigranes their attention calls—

' Ambassadors from Persia's king, we stand  
 Before you, Grecians. To display the pow'r  
 Of our great master were a needless task.  
 The name of Xerxes, Asia's mighty lord,  
 Invincible, exalted on a throne  
 Surpassing human lustre, must have reach'd  
 To ev'ry clime, and ev'ry heart impress'd  
 With awe and low submission. Yet I swear,  
 By yon refulgent orb which flames above,  
 The glorious symbol of eternal pow'r,  
 This military throng, this shew of war,

Well nigh persuade me you have never heard  
 That name, at whose commanding sound the banks  
 Of Indus tremble, and the Caspian wave,  
 Th' Ægyptian flood, the Hellespontic surge,  
 Obedient roll. O impotent and rash!  
 Whom yet the large beneficence of heav'n,  
 And heav'nly Xerxes, merciful and kind,  
 Deign to preserve, resign your arms! Disperse  
 All to your cities! There let humblest hands  
 With earth and water greet your destin'd lord.'

As through th' extensive grove, whose leafy boughs,  
 Entwining, crown some eminence with shade,  
 The tempests rush sonorous, and between  
 The crashing branches roar; by fierce disdain,  
 By indignation, thus the Grecians, rous'd,  
 In loudest clamour close the Persian's speech.  
 But ev'ry tongue was hush'd, when Sparta's king  
 This brief reply deliver'd from his seat—

' O Persian, when to Xerxes thou return'st,  
 Say thou hast told the wonders of his pow'r.  
 Then say thou saw'st a slender band of Greece,  
 Which dares his boasted millions to the field.'

He adds no more. Th' ambassadors retire.  
 Them o'er the limits of the Grecian lines  
 Diomedon and Thespia's youth conduct.  
 In slow solemnity they all proceed,  
 And sullen silence; but their looks denote  
 Far more than speech could utter. Wrath contracts  
 The forehead of Diomedon. His teeth  
 Gnash with impatience of delay'd revenge.  
 Disdain, which sprung from conscious merit, flush'd  
 The cheek of Dithyrambus. On the face  
 Of either Persian, arrogance, incens'd  
 By disappointment, lour'd. The utmost strait  
 They now attain'd, which open'd on the tents  
 Of Asia, there discov'ring wide to view  
 Her deep, immense arrangement. Then the heart  
 Of vain Tigranes, swelling at the sight,  
 Thus overflows in loud and haughty phrase—

' O Arimanius, origin of ill,  
 Have we demanded of thy ruthless pow'r  
 Thus with the curse of madness to afflict  
 These wretched men? But, since thy dreadful ire  
 To irresistible perdition dooms

The Grecian race, we vainly should oppose.  
 Be thy dire will accomplish'd. Let them fall,  
 Their native soil be fatten'd with their blood.'

Enrag'd, the stern Diomedon replies—  
 'Thou base dependant on a lawless king,  
 Thou purple slave, thou boaster, dost thou know,  
 That I beheld the Marathonian field?  
 Where, like the Libyan sands before the wind,  
 Your host was scatter'd by Athenian spears?  
 Where thou, perhaps by ignominious flight,  
 Didst from this arm protect thy shiv'ring limbs?  
 O let me find thee in to-morrow's fight!  
 Along this rocky pavement shalt thou lie,  
 To dogs a banquet.' With uplifted palms,  
 Tigranes then—' Omnipotent support  
 Of scepter'd Xerxes, Horomazes, hear!  
 To thee his first victorious fruits of war  
 Thy worshipper devotes, the gory spoils,  
 Which from this Grecian, by the rising dawn,  
 In sight of either host, my strength shall rend.'

At length Phraortes, interposing, spake—

‘ I too would find, among the Grecian chiefs,  
One who in battle dares abide my lance.’

The gallant youth of Thespia swift reply’d—  
‘ Thou look’st on me, O Persian. Worthier far  
Thou might’st have singled from the ranks of Greece,  
Not one more willing, to essay thy force.  
Yes, I will prove, before the eye of Mars,  
How far the prowess of her meanest chief  
Beyond thy vaunts deserves the palm of fame.’

This said, the Persians to their king repair;  
Back to their camp the Grecians. There they find  
Each soldier poising his extended spear,  
His weighty buckler bracing on his arm,  
In warlike preparation. Through the files  
Each leader, moving vigilant, by praise,  
By exhortation, aids their native warmth.  
Alone the Theban Anaxander pin’d,  
Who thus apart his Malian friend bespake—

‘ What has thy lofty eloquence avail’d,  
Alas! in vain attempting to confound

The Spartan valour? With redoubled fires,  
 See how their bosoms glow. They wish to die;  
 They wait impatient for th' unequal fight.  
 Too soon th' insuperable foes will spread  
 Promiscuous havock round, and Thebans share  
 The doom of Spartans. Through the guarded pass  
 Who will adventure Asia's camp to reach  
 In our behalf? that Xerxes may be warn'd  
 To spare his friends amid the gen'ral wreck;  
 When his high-swoln resentment, like a flood  
 Increas'd by stormy show'rs, shall cover Greece  
 With desolation.' Epialtes here—

' Whence, Anaxander, this unjust despair?  
 Is there a path on Oeta's hills unknown  
 To Epialtes? Over trackless rocks,  
 Through mazy woods, my secret steps can pass.  
 Farewell! I go. Thy merit shall be told  
 To Persia's king. Thou only watch the hour;  
 When wanted most, thy ready succour lend.'

Meantime a weary, comprehensive care  
 To ev'ry part Leonidas extends;



As in the human frame through ev'ry vein,  
 And artery minute, the ruling heart  
 Its vital pow'rs disperses. In his tent  
 The prudent chief of Locris he consults;  
 He summons Melibœus by the voice  
 Of Agis. In humility not mean,  
 By no unseemly ignorance depress'd,  
 Th' ingenuous swain, by all th' illustrious house  
 Of Ajax honour'd, bows before the king,  
 Who gracious spake—' The confidence bestow'd,  
 The praise by sage Oïleus might suffice  
 To verify thy worth. Myself have watch'd,  
 Have found thee skilful, active, and discreet.  
 Thou know'st the region round. With Agis go,  
 The upper straits, the Phocian camp, explore.'

' O condescension!' Melibœus then,  
 More ornamental to the great than gems,  
 A purple robe, or diadem! The king  
 Accepts my service. Pleasing is my task.  
 Spare not thy servant. Exercise my zeal.  
 Oïleus will rejoice, and, smiling, say  
 An humble hand may smooth a hero's path.'

He leads the way, while Agis, following, spake—  
 ‘ O swain, distinguish’d by a lib’ral mind,  
 Who were thy parents? Where thy place of birth?  
 What chance depriv’d thee of a father’s house?  
 Oileus sure thy liberty would grant,  
 Or Sparta’s king solicit for that grace;  
 When in a station equal to thy worth  
 Thou may’st be rank’d.’ The prudent hind began—

‘ In diff’rent stations diff’rent virtues dwell,  
 All reaping diff’rent benefits. The great  
 In dignity and honours meet reward  
 For acts of bounty and heroic toils.  
 A servant’s merit is obedience, truth,  
 Fidelity; his recompense content.  
 I’m not offended at my words, O chief!  
 They, who are free, with envy may behold  
 His bondman of Oileus. To his trust,  
 His love exalted, I by nature’s pow’r,  
 From his pure model, could not fail to mould  
 What thou entitlest lib’ral. Whence I came,  
 Or who my parents, is to me unknown.  
 In childhood seiz’d by robbers, I was sold.

They took their price; they hush'd th' atrocious deed.  
 Dear to Oileus and his race, I throve;  
 And, whether noble or ignoble born,  
 I am contented, studious of their love  
 Alone. Ye sons of Sparta, I admire  
 Your acts, your spirit, but confine my own  
 To their condition, happy in my lord,  
 Himself of men most happy.' Agis bland  
 Rejoins. 'O born with talents to become  
 A lot more noble, which, by thee refus'd,  
 Thou dost the more deserve! Laconia's king  
 Discerns thy merit through its modest veil.  
 Consummate prudence in thy words I hear.  
 Long may contentment, justly priz'd, be thine!  
 But, should the state demand thee, I foresee  
 Thou wouldst, like others, in the field excel,  
 Wouldst share in glory.' Blithe return'd the swain—

'Not ev'ry service is confin'd to arms.  
 Thou shalt behold me in my present state  
 Not useless. If the charge Oileus gave  
 I can accomplish, meriting his praise  
 And thy esteem, my glory will be full.'

Both pleas'd, in converse thus pursue their way,  
Where Oeta lifts her summits huge to heav'n  
In rocks abrupt, pyramidal, or tower'd,  
Like castles. Sudden from a tufted crag,  
Where goats are browsing, Melibœus hears  
A call of welcome. There his course he stays.

1

# LEONIDAS.

BOOK IV.

## THE ARGUMENT.

Tigranes and Phraortes repair to Xerxes, whom they find seated on a throne, surrounded by his Satraps, in a magnificent pavilion ; while the Magi stand before him, and sing a hymn, containing the religion of Zoroastres. Xerxes, notwithstanding the arguments of his brothers, Hyperanthes and Abrocomes, gives no credit to the ambassadors, who report that the Grecians are determined to maintain the pass against him ; but, by the advice of Artemisia, the queen of Caria, ascends his chariot, to take a view of the Grecians himself, and commands Demaratus, an exiled king of Sparta, to attend him. He passes through the midst of his army, consisting of many nations, differing in arms, customs, and manners. He advances to the entrance of the straits, and, surprised at the behaviour of the Spartans, demands the reason of it from Damaratus ; which occasions a conversation between them, on the mercenary forces of Persia and the militia of Greece. Demaratus, weeping at the sight of his countrymen, is comforted by Hyperanthes. Xerxes, still incredulous, commands Tigranes and Phraortes to bring the Grecians bound before him the next day, and retires to his pavilion. Artemisia remains behind with her son, and communicates to Hyperanthes her apprehensions of a defeat at Thermopylæ. She takes an accurate view of the pass, chooses a convenient place for an ambuscade, and, on her departure to the Persian camp, is surprised by a reproof from a woman of an awful appearance on a cliff of mount Oeta.

# LEONIDAS.

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## BOOK IV.

THE plain beyond Thermopylæ is girt  
Half round by mountains, half by Neptune lav'd.  
The arduous ridge is broken deep in clefts,  
Which open channels to pellucid streams,  
In rapid flow sonorous. Chief in fame,  
Spercheos, boasting once his poplars tall,  
Foams down a stony bed. Throughout the face  
Of this broad champaign, numberless, are pitch'd  
Barbarian tents. Along the winding flood  
To rich Thessalia's confines they extend.  
They fill the vallies, late profusely bless'd  
In nature's vary'd beauties. Hostile spears  
Now bristle horrid through her languid shrubs.  
Pale die her flowrets under barb'rous feet.



The distant navy, dancing on the foam,  
 Th' unbounded camp, enveloping the plain,  
 With Xerxes' tent, august in structure, plac'd  
 A central object, to attract the eyes  
 Of subject millions. Thither now resort  
 Tigranes and Phraortes. Him they find  
 Enclos'd by princes, by illustrious chiefs,  
 The potentates of Asia. Near his side  
 Abrocomes and Hyperanthes wait,  
 His gallant brothers, with Mazæus brave,  
 Pandates, Intaphernes, mighty lords!  
 Their sceptred master from his radiant seat  
 Looks down, imperious. So the stately tow'r  
 Of Belus, mingling its majestic brow  
 With heav'n's bright azure, from on high survey'd  
 The huge extent of Babylon, with all  
 Her sumptuous domes and palaces beneath.  
 This day his banners to unfurl in Greece  
 The monarch's will decides; but first ordains  
 That grateful hymns should celebrate the name  
 Of Horomazes: so the Persians call'd  
 The world's great author. Rob'd in purest white,  
 The Magi rang'd before th' unfolded tent.

Fire blaz'd beside them. Tow'rd's the sacred flame  
They turn'd, and sent their tuneful praise to heav'n.

From Zoroastres was the song deriv'd,  
Who on the hills of Persia, from his cave,  
By flow'rs environ'd, and melodious founts,  
Which sooth'd the solemn mansion, had reveal'd  
How Horomazes, radiant source of good,  
Original, immortal, fram'd the globe  
In fruitfulness and beauty: how with stars  
By him the heav'ns were spangled: how the sun,  
Refulgent Mithra, purest spring of light  
And genial warmth, whence teeming nature smiles,  
Burst from the east at his creating voice;  
When, straight beyond the golden verge of day,  
Night shew'd the horrors of her distant reign,  
Where black and hateful Arimanius frown'd,  
The author foul of evil: how with shades  
From his dire mansion he deform'd the works  
Of Horomazes: turn'd to noxious heat  
The solar beam, that foodful earth might parch;  
That streams, exhaling, might forsake their beds;  
Whence pestilence and famine: how the pow'r

Of Horomazes in the human breast  
 Benevolence and equity infus'd,  
 Truth, temperance, and wisdom, sprung from heav'n:  
 When Arimanius blacken'd all the soul  
 With falsehood and injustice, with desires  
 Insatiable, with violence and rage,  
 Malignity and folly. If the hand  
 Of Horomazes on precarious life  
 Sheds wealth and pleasure, swift th' infernal god,  
 With wild excess or av'rice, blasts the joy.  
 Thou, Horomazes, victory dost give.  
 By thee with fame the regal head is crown'd.  
 Great Xerxes owns thy succour. When in storms  
 The hate of direful Arimanius swell'd  
 The Hellespont, thou o'er its chafing breast  
 The destin'd master of the world didst lead,  
 This day his promis'd glories to enjoy:  
 When Greece affrighted to his arm shall bend;  
 Ev'n as at last shall Arimanius fall  
 Before thy might, and evil be no more.

The Magi ceas'd their harmony. Behold,  
 From her tall ship, between a double row

Of naval warriors, while a golden ray  
 Shoots from her standard, Artemisia lands.  
 In her enrich'd accoutrements of war,  
 The full-wrought buckler and high-crested helm,  
 In Caria first devis'd, across the beach  
 Her tow'ring form advances. So the pine,  
 From Taurus hewn, mature in spiry pride,  
 Now by the sailor, in its canvas wings,  
 Voluminous, and dazzling pendants dress'd,  
 On Artemisia's own imperial deck  
 Is seen to rise, and overtop the grove  
 Of crowded masts surrounding. In her heart  
 Deep scorn of courtly counsellors she bore,  
 Who fill with impious vanity their king;  
 As when he lash'd the Hellespont with rods,  
 Amid the billows cast a golden chain  
 To fetter Neptune. Yet her brow severe  
 Unbent its rigour often, as she glanc'd  
 On her young son, who, pacing near in arms  
 Of Carian guise, proportion'd to his years,  
 Look'd up, and waken'd, by repeated smiles,  
 Maternal fondness, melting in that eye  
 Which scowl'd on purpled flatterers. Her seat

At the right hand of Xerxes she assumes,  
 Invited; while in adoration bow'd  
 Tigranes and Phraortes. Prone they lay;  
 Across their foreheads spread their servile palms,  
 As from a present deity, too bright  
 For mortal vision, to conceal their eyes.  
 At length, in abject phrase, Tigranes thus—

‘ O Xerxes, live for ever! Gracious lord,  
 Who dost permit thy servants to approach  
 Thy awful sight, and prostrate to confess  
 Thy majesty and radiance! May the pow'r  
 Of Horomazes stretch thy regal arm  
 O'er endless nations, from the Indian shores  
 To those wide floods which beat Iberian strands,  
 From northern Tanais to the source of Nile!  
 Still from thy head may Arimanius bend  
 Against thy foes his malice! Yonder Greeks,  
 Already smit with frenzy by his wrath,  
 Reject thy proffer'd clemency. They choose  
 To magnify thy glory by their fall.’

The monarch, turning to his brothers, spake—

‘ Say, Hyperanthes, can thy soul believe  
 These tidings? Sure these slaves have never dar’d  
 To face the Grecians, but delude our ears  
 With base impostures, which their fear suggests.’

He frown’d, and Hyperanthes calm reply’d—  
 ‘ O from his servants may the king avert  
 His indignation! Greece was fam’d of old  
 For martial spirit and a dauntless breed.  
 I once have try’d their valour. To my words  
 Abrocomes can witness. When thy sire  
 And ours, Darius, to Athenian shores,  
 With Artaphernes brave and Datis, sent  
 Our tender youth, at Marathon we found  
 How weak the hope that numbers could dismay  
 A foe, resolv’d on victory or death.  
 Yet not as one contemptible, or base,  
 Let me appear before thee. Though the Greeks  
 With such persisting courage be endu’d,  
 Soon as the king shall summon to the field,  
 He shall behold me in the dang’rous van  
 Exalt my spear, and pierce the hostile ranks,  
 Or sink beneath them.’ Xerxes swift rejoin’d—

' Why over Asia, and the Libyan soil,  
 With all their nations, doth my potent arm  
 Extend its sceptre? Wherefore do I sweep  
 Across the earth with millions in my train?  
 Why shade the ocean with unnumber'd sails?  
 Why all this pow'r, unless th' Almighty's will  
 Decreed one master to the subject world;  
 And that the earth's extremity alone  
 Should bound my empire? He for this reduc'd  
 The Nile's revolted sons, enlarg'd my sway  
 With sandy Libya, and the sultry clime  
 Of Æthiopia. He for this subdu'd  
 The Hellespontic foam, and taught the sea  
 Obedience to my nod. Then dream no more  
 That heav'n, deserting my imperial cause,  
 With courage more than human will inspire  
 Yon despicable Grecians, and expunge  
 The common fears of nature from their breasts.'

The monarch ceas'd. Abrocomes began—  
 ' The king commands us to reveal our thoughts.  
 Incredulous he hears. But time and truth  
 Not Horomazes can arrest. Thy beams

To instant light'ning, Mythra, mayst thou change  
 For my destruction; may th' offended king  
 Frown on his servant; cast a loathing eye,  
 If the assertion of my lips be false :  
 Our further march those Grecians will oppose.'

Amid th' encircling peers Argestes sat,  
 A potent prince. O'er Sipylus he reign'd,  
 Whose verdant summits overlook'd the waves  
 Of Hermus and Pactolus. Either stream,  
 Enrich'd by golden sands, a tribute pay'd  
 To this great Satrap. Through the servile court  
 Yet none was found more practis'd in the arts  
 Of mean submission; none more skill'd to gain  
 The royal favour; none who better knew  
 The phrase, the look, the gesture, of a slave;  
 None more detesting Artemisia's worth;  
 By her none more despis'd. His master's eye  
 He caught, then spake—' Display thy dazzling state,  
 Thou deity of Asia. Greece will hide  
 Before thy presence her dejected face.'

Last Artemisia, rising stern, began—  
 ' Why sits the lord of Asia in his tent,



Unprofitably wasting precious hours  
 In vain discussion, whether yonder Greeks,  
 Rang'd in defence of that important pass,  
 Will fight or fly? A question by the sword  
 To be decided. Still to narrow straits,  
 By land, by sea, thy council hath confin'd  
 Each enterprise of war. In numbers weak,  
 Twice have th' Athenians in Eubœa's frith  
 Repuls'd thy navy. But, whate'er thy will,  
 Be it enforc'd by vigour. Let the king  
 The difference see, by trial in the field,  
 Between smooth sound and valour. Then dissolve  
 These impotent debates. Ascend thy car.  
 The future stage of war thyself explore.  
 Behind thee leave the vanity of hope,  
 That such a foe to splendour will submit,  
 Whom steel, not gold, must vanquish. Thou provide  
 Thy mail, Argestes. Not in silken robes,  
 Not as in council with an oily tongue,  
 But spear to spear, and clanging shield to shield,  
 Thou soon must grapple on a field of blood.'

The king arose. 'No more. Prepare my car.'

The Spartan exile, Demaratus, call.

We will ourselves advance to view the foe.'

The monarch will'd, and suddenly he heard  
 His trampling horses. High on silver wheels  
 The iv'ry car with azure sapphires shone,  
 Cærulean beryls, and the jasper green,  
 The emerald, the ruby's glowing blush,  
 The flaming topaz with its golden beam,  
 The pearl, th' empurpled amethyst, and all  
 The various gems, which India's mines afford  
 To deck the pomp of kings. In burnish'd gold  
 A sculptur'd eagle from behind display'd  
 His stately neck, and o'er the royal head  
 Outstretch'd his dazzling wings. Eight gen'rous steeds,  
 Which on the fam'd Nisæan plain were nurs'd  
 In wintry Media, drew the radiant car.  
 Not those of old to Hercules refus'd  
 By false Laomedon ; nor they which bore  
 The son of Thetis through the scatter'd rear  
 Of Troy's devoted race, with these might vie  
 In strength or beauty. In obedient pride  
 They hear their lord. Exulting, in the air

They toss their foreheads. On their glist'ning chests  
 The silver manes disport. The king ascends.  
 Beside his footstool Demaratus sits.  
 The charioteer now shakes th' effulgent reins,  
 Strong Patiramphe. At the signal bound  
 Th' attentive steeds; the chariot flies; behind,  
 Ten thousand horse in thunder sweep the field.  
 Down to the sea-beat margin, on a plain  
 Of vast expansion, in battalia wait  
 The eastern bands. To these th' imperial wheels,  
 By princes follow'd in a hundred cars,  
 Proceed. The queen of Caria and her son  
 With Hyperanthes rode. The king's approach  
 Swift through the wide arrangement is proclaim'd.  
 He now draws nigh. Th' innumerable host  
 Roll back by nations, and admit their lord,  
 With all his Satraps. As from crystal domes,  
 Built underneath an arch of pendant seas,  
 When that stern pow'r, whose trident rules the floods,  
 With each cærulean deity ascends,  
 Thron'd in his pearly chariot, all the deep  
 Divides its bosom to th' emerging god:  
 So Xerxes rode between the Asian world,

On either side receding: when, as down  
 Th' immeasurable ranks his sight was lost,  
 A momentary gloom o'ercast his mind,  
 While this reflection fill'd his eyes with tears;  
 That, soon as time a hundred years had told,  
 Not one among those millions should survive.  
 Whence to obscure thy pride arose that cloud?  
 Was it that once humanity could touch  
 A tyrant's breast? Or rather did thy soul  
 Repine, O Xerxes, at the bitter thought  
 That all thy pow'r was mortal? But the veil  
 Of sadness soon forsook his bright'ning eye,  
 As with adoring awe those millions bow'd,  
 And to his heart relentless pride recall'd.  
 Elate, the mingled prospect he surveys  
 Of glitt'ring files, unnumber'd; chariots, scyth'd,  
 On thund'ring axles roll'd; and haughty steeds,  
 In sumptuous trappings clad; Barbaric pomp!  
 While gorgeous banners to the sun expand  
 Their streaming volumes of relucient gold,  
 Pre-eminent, amidst tiaras gemm'd,  
 Engraven helmets, shields emboss'd, and spears  
 In number equal to the bladed grass,

Whose living green in vernal beauty clothes  
 Thessalia's vale. What pow'rs of sounding verse  
 Can to the mind present th' amazing scene?  
 Not thee, whom rumour's fabling voice delights,  
 Poetic fancy, to my aid I call;  
 But thou, historic truth, support my song,  
 Which shall the various multitude display,  
 Their arms, their manners, and their native seats.

The Persians first in scaly corselets shone;  
 A gen'rous nation, worthy to enjoy  
 The liberty their injur'd fathers lost,  
 Whose arms for Cyrus overturn'd the strength  
 Of Babylon and Sardis. Pow'r advanc'd  
 The victor's head above his country's laws.  
 Their tongues were practis'd in the words of truth;  
 Their limbs inur'd to ev'ry manly toil,  
 To brace the bow, to rule th' impetuous steed,  
 To dart the javelin; but, untaught to form  
 The ranks of war, with unconnected force,  
 With ineffectual fortitude, they rush'd,  
 As on a fence of adamant, to pierce  
 Th' indissoluble phalanx. Lances short,

and osier-woven targets, they oppos'd  
 the weighty Grecian spears, and massy shields.  
 On ev'ry head tiaras rose like tow'rs,  
 impenetrable. With golden gloss  
 they adorn'd their gay sandals, and the floating reins  
 on each proud courser. Daggers on their thighs,  
 well-furnish'd quivers on their shoulders, hung,  
 and strongest bows of mighty size they bore.  
 Resembling these in arms, the Medes are seen,  
 the Cissians and Hyrcanians. Media once  
 from her bleak mountains aw'd the subject east.  
 Her kings in cold Ecbatana were thron'd.  
 The Cissians march'd from Susa's regal walls,  
 from sultry fields, o'erspread with branching palms,  
 and white with lilies, water'd by the floods  
 of fam'd Choaspes. His transparent wave  
 the costly goblet wafts to Persia's kings.  
 All other streams the royal lip disdains.  
 Hyrcania's race forsook their fruitful clime,  
 dark in the shadows of expanding oaks,  
 to Ceres dear and Bacchus. There the corn,  
 bent by its foodful burdens, sheds, unreap'd,  
 its plenteous seed, impregnating the soil

With future harvests; whilst in ev'ry wood  
 Their precious labours on the loaden boughs  
 The honey'd swarms pursue. Assyria's sons !  
 Display their brazen casques, unskilful work  
 Of rude Barbarians. Each sustains a mace,  
 O'erlaid with iron. Near Euphrates' banks,  
 Within the mighty Babylonian gates,  
 They dwell; and where, still mightier once in sway,  
 Old Ninus rear'd its head, th' imperial seat  
 Of eldest tyrants. These Chaldæa joins,  
 The land of shepherds. From the pastures wide  
 There Belus first discern'd the various course  
 Of heav'n's bright planets, and the clust'ring stars,  
 With names distinguish'd; whence himself was deem'd  
 The first of gods. His sky-ascending fane  
 In Babylon the proud Assyrians rais'd.  
 Drawn from the bounteous soil, by Ochus lav'd,  
 The Bactrians stood, and, rough in skins of goats,  
 The Paricanian archers. Caspian ranks,  
 From barren mountains, from the joyless coast  
 Around the stormy lake, whose name they bore,  
 Their scymetars upheld, and cany bows.  
 The Indian tribes a threefold host compose.

Part guide the courser, part the rapid car;  
 The rest on foot within the bending cane,  
 For slaughter, fix the iron-pointed reed.  
 They, o'er the Indus from the distant verge  
 Of Ganges passing, left a region, lov'd  
 By lavish nature. There the season bland  
 Bestows a double harvest. Honey'd shrubs,  
 The cinnamon, the spikenard, bless their fields.  
 Array'd in native wealth, each warrior shines.  
 His ears bright-beaming pendants grace; his hands,  
 Encircled, wear a bracelet, starr'd with jems.  
 Such were the nations who to Xerxes sent  
 Their mingled aids of infantry and horse.

Now, Muse, recite what multitudes obscur'd  
 The plain on foot, or elevated high,  
 On martial axles or on camels, beat  
 The loosen'd mould. The Parthians first appear,  
 Then weak in numbers, from unfruitful hills,  
 From woods, nor yet for warlike steeds renown'd.  
 Near them the Sogdians, Dadices, arrange,  
 Gandarians and Chorasmians. Sacian throngs  
 From cold Imaus pour'd, from Oxus' wave,



From Cyra, built on Iaxartes' brink,  
 A bound of Persia's empire. Wild, untam'd,  
 To fury prone, their deserts they forsook.  
 A bow, a falchion, and a pond'rous axe,  
 The savage legions arm'd. A pointed casque  
 O'er each grim visage rear'd an iron cone.  
 In arms like Persians, the Saranges stood.  
 High as their knees, the shapely buskins clung  
 Around their legs. Magnificent they trod,  
 In garments richly tinctur'd. Next are seen  
 The Pactian, Mycian, and the Utian train,  
 In skins of goats rude vested. But in spoils  
 Of tawny lions, and of spotted pards,  
 The graceful range of Æthiopians shews  
 An equal stature, and a beauteous frame.  
 Their torrid region had imbrown'd their cheeks,  
 And curl'd their jetty locks. In ancient song  
 Renown'd for justice, riches they disdain'd,  
 As foes to virtue. From their seat remote,  
 On Nilus' verge above th' Ægyptian bound,  
 Forc'd by their king's malignity and pride,  
 These friends of hospitality and peace,  
 Themselves uninjur'd, wage reluctant war

Against a land, whose climate and whose name  
 To them were strange. With hardest stone they point  
 The rapid arrow. Bows four cubits long,  
 Form'd of elastic branches from the palm,  
 They carry, knotted clubs, and lances, arm'd  
 With horns of goats. The Paphlagonians march'd  
 From where Carambis, with projected brows,  
 O'erlooks the dusky Euxin, wrapt in mists;  
 From where, through flow'rs which paint his vary'd banks,  
 Parthenius flows. The Ligyan bands succeed;  
 The Matienians, Mariandenians, next;  
 To them the Syrian multitudes, who range  
 Among the cedars on the shaded ridge  
 Of Libanus; who cultivate the glebe,  
 Wide-water'd by Orontes; who reside  
 Near Daphne's grove, or pluck from loaded palms  
 The foodful date, which clusters on the plains  
 Of rich Damascus. All, who bear the name  
 Of Cappadocians, swell the Syrian host,  
 With those who gather from the fragrant shrub  
 The aromatic balsam, and extract  
 Its milky juice along the lovely side  
 Of Jordan, winding, till, immers'd, he sleeps

Beneath a pitchy surface, which obscures  
 Th' Asphaltic pool. The Phrygians then advance;  
 To them their ancient colony are join'd,  
 Armenia's sons. These see the gushing founts  
 Of strong Euphrates cleave the yielding earth,  
 Then, wide in lakes expanding, hide the plain;  
 Whence, with collected waters, fierce and deep,  
 His passage rending through diminish'd rocks,  
 To Babylon he foams. Not so the stream  
 Of soft Araxes to the Caspian glides;  
 He, stealing imperceptibly, sustains  
 The green profusion of Armenia's meads.

Now, strange to view, in similar attire,  
 But far unlike in manners, to the Greeks,  
 Appear the Lydians. Wantonness and sport  
 Were all their care. Beside Cäyster's brink,  
 Or smooth Mæander, winding silent by;  
 Beside Pactolean waves, among the vines  
 Of Tmolus rising, or the wealthy tide  
 Of golden-sanded Hermus, they allure  
 The sight, enchanted by the graceful dance;  
 Or with melodious sweetness charm the air,

And melt to softest languishment the soul.  
 What to the field of danger could incite  
 These tender sons of luxury? The lash  
 Of their fell sov'reign drove their shiv'ring backs  
 Through hail and tempest, which enrag'd the main,  
 And shook beneath their trembling steps the pile,  
 Conjoining Asia and the western world.  
 To them Mæonia, hot with sulph'rous mines,  
 Unites her troops. No tree adorns their fields,  
 Unbless'd by verdure. Ashes hide the soil;  
 Black are the rocks, and ev'ry hill deform'd  
 By conflagration. Helmets press their brows.  
 Two darts they brandish. On their woolly vests  
 A sword is girt; and hairy hides compose  
 Their bucklers round and small. The Mysians left  
 Olympus wood-envelop'd; left the meads  
 Wash'd by Caïcus, and the baneful tide  
 Of Lycus, nurse to serpents. Next advance  
 An ancient nation, who in early times,  
 By Trojan arms assail'd, their native land  
 Esteem'd less dear than freedom, and exchang'd  
 Their seat on Strymon, where in Thrace he pours  
 A freezing current, for the distant flood

Of fishy Sangar. These, Bithynians nam'd,  
 Their habitation to the sacred feet  
 Of Dindymus extend. Yet there they groan  
 Beneath oppression, and their freedom mourn  
 On Sangar now, as once on Strymon, lost.  
 The ruddy skins of foxes cloth'd their heads.  
 Their shields were fashion'd like the horned moon.  
 A vest embrac'd their bodies; while abroad,  
 Ting'd with unnumber'd hues, a mantle flow'd.  
 But other Thracians, who their former name  
 Retain'd in Asia, fulgent morions wore,  
 With horns of bulls, in imitating brass,  
 Curv'd o'er the crested ridge. Phœnician cloth  
 Their legs infolded. Wont to chase the wolf,  
 A hunter's spear they grasp'd. What nations still  
 On either side of Xerxes, while he pass'd,  
 Their huge array discov'ring, swell his soul  
 With more than mortal pride? The cluster'd bands  
 Of Moschians and Macronians now appear;  
 The Mosynœcians, who, on berries fed,  
 In wooden tow'rs along the Pontic sands  
 Repose their painted limbs. The mirthful race  
 Of Tibarenians next, whose careless minds

Delight in play and laughter. Then advance,  
 In garments buckled on their spacious chests,  
 A people, destin'd in eternal verse,  
 Ev'n thine, sublime Mæonides, to live.  
 These are the Milyans; Solymi their name  
 In thy celestial strains; Pisidia's hills  
 Their dwelling. Once a formidable train,  
 They fac'd the strong Bellerophon in war:  
 Now, doom'd a more tremendous foe to meet,  
 Themselves unnerv'd by thralldom, they must leave  
 Their putrid bodies to the dogs of Greece.  
 The Marians follow. Next is Aria's host,  
 Drawn from a region horrid all in thorn,  
 A dreary waste of sands, which mock the toil  
 Of patient culture; save one favour'd spot,  
 Which from the wild emerges like an isle,  
 Attir'd in verdure, interspers'd with vines  
 Of gen'rous nurture, yielding juice which scorns  
 The injuries of time: yet nature's hand  
 Had sown their rocks with coral; had enrich'd  
 Their desert hills with veins of sapphires blue,  
 Which on the turban shine. On ev'ry neck  
 The coral blushes through the num'rous throng.

The Allarodians, and Sasperian bands,  
 Equipp'd like Colchians, wield a falchion small.  
 Their heads are guarded by a helm of wood;  
 Their lances short; of hides undress'd their shields.  
 The Colchians march'd from Phasis; from the strand  
 Where once Medea, fair enchantress, stood,  
 And, wond'ring, view'd the first advent'rous keel  
 Which cut the Pontic foam. From Argo's side  
 The demigods descended. They repair'd  
 To her fell sire's inhospitable hall.  
 His blooming graces Jason there disclos'd:  
 With ev'ry art of eloquence divine  
 He claim'd the golden fleece. The virgin heard;  
 She gaz'd in fatal ravishment, and lov'd:  
 Then to the hero she resigns her heart.  
 Her magic tames the brazen-footed bulls.  
 She lulls the sleepless dragon. O'er the main  
 He wafts the golden prize, and gen'rous fair,  
 The destin'd victim of his treach'rous vows.  
 The hostile Colchians then pursu'd their flight  
 In vain. By ancient enmity inflam'd,  
 Or to recall the long-forgotten wrong,  
 Compell'd by Xerxes, now they menace Greece

With desolation. Next in Median garb  
 A crowd appear'd, who left the peopled isles  
 In Persia's gulph, and round Arabia strewn.  
 Some in their native topaz were adorn'd,  
 From Ophiodes, from Topazos sprung;  
 Some in the shells of tortoises, which brood  
 Around Casitis' verge. For battle range  
 Those who reside where, all beset with palms,  
 Erythras lies entomb'd, a potent king,  
 Who nam'd of old the Erythræan main.  
 On chariots scyth'd the Libyans sat, array'd  
 In skins terrific, brandishing their darts  
 Of wood, well-temper'd in the hard'ning flames.  
 Not Libya's deserts from tyrannic sway  
 Could hide her sons; much less could freedom dwell  
 Amid the plenty of Arabia's fields;  
 Where spicy Cassia, where the fragrant reed,  
 Where myrrh and hallow'd frankincense, perfume  
 The Zephyr's wing. A bow of largest size  
 Th' Arabian carries. O'er his lucid vest  
 Loose floats a mantle, on his shoulder clasp'd.  
 Two chosen myriads on the lofty backs  
 Of camels rode, who match'd the fleetest horse.



Such were the numbers which, from Asia led,  
 In base prostration bow'd before the wheels  
 Of Xerxes' chariot. Yet what legions more  
 The Malian sand o'ershadow? Forward rolls  
 The regal car through nations, who in arms,  
 In order'd ranks, unlike the orient tribes,  
 Upheld the spear and buckler. But, untaught  
 To bend the servile knee, erect they stood;  
 Unless that, mourning o'er the shameful weight  
 Of their new bondage, some their brows depress'd,  
 Their arms with grief distaining. Europe's sons  
 Were these, whom Xerxes by resistless force  
 Had gather'd round his standards. Murm'ring here,  
 The sons of Thrace and Macedonia rang'd;  
 Here, on his steed, the brave Thessalian frown'd;  
 There pin'd reluctant multitudes of Greece,  
 Redundant plants, in colonies dispers'd  
 Between Byzantium and the Malian bay.

Through all the nations, who ador'd his pride  
 Or fear'd his pow'r, the monarch now was pass'd;  
 Nor yet among those millions could be found  
 One, who in beauteous features might compare,

Or tow'ring size, with Xerxes. O! possess'd  
 Of all but virtue, doom'd to shew how mean,  
 How weak, without her is unbounded pow'r!  
 The charm of beauty, and the blaze of state,  
 How insecure of happiness! how vain!  
 Thou, who couldst mourn the common lot, by heav'n  
 From none withheld, which oft to thousands proves  
 Their only refuge from a tyrant's rage;  
 Which in consuming sickness, age, or pain,  
 Becomes at last a soothing hope to all:  
 Thou, who couldst weep that nature's gentle hand  
 Should lay her weary'd offspring in the tomb;  
 Yet couldst, remorseless, from their peaceful seats  
 Lead half the nations, victims to thy pride,  
 To famine, plague, and massacre a prey;  
 What didst thou merit from the injur'd world?  
 What suff'rings, to compensate for the tears  
 Of Asia's mothers, for unpeopled realms,  
 For all this waste of nature? On his host  
 Th' exulting monarch bends his haughty sight,  
 To Demaratus then directs his voice—

‘ My father, great Darius, to thy mind

Recall, O Spartan. Gracious he receiv'd  
 Thy wand'ring steps, expell'd their native home.  
 My favour too remember. To beguile  
 Thy benefactor, and disfigure truth,  
 Would ill become thee. With consid'rate eyes  
 Look back on these battalions. Now declare  
 If yonder Grecians will oppose their march.'

To him the exile—' Deem not, mighty lord,  
 I will deceive thy goodness by a tale  
 To give them glory who degraded mine.  
 Nor be the king offended while I use  
 The voice of truth. The Spartans never fly.'

Contemptuous smil'd the monarch, and resum'd—  
 ' Wilt thou, in Lacedæmon once supreme,  
 Encounter twenty Persians? Yet these Greeks  
 In greater disproportion must engage  
 Our host to-morrow.' Demaratus then—

' By single combat were the trial vain  
 To shew the pow'r of well-united force,  
 Which oft by military skill surmounts

The weight of numbers. Prince, the diff'rence learn  
Between thy warriors and the sons of Greece.  
The flow'r, the safeguard, of thy num'rous camp  
Are mercenaries. These are canton'd round  
Thy provinces. No fertile field demands  
Their painful hand to break the fallow glebe.  
Them to the noon-day toil no harvest calls;  
Nor on the mountain falls the stubborn oak  
By their laborious axe. Their watchful eyes  
Observe not how the flocks and heifers feed.  
To them, of wealth, of all possessions, void,  
The name of country with an empty sound  
Flies o'er the ear, nor warms their joyless hearts,  
Who share no country. Needy, yet in scorn  
Rejecting labour, wretched by their wants,  
Yet profligate through indolence, with limbs  
Enervated and soft, with minds corrupt,  
From misery, debauchery, and sloth,  
Are these to battle drawn against a foe  
Train'd in gymnastic exercise and arms,  
Inur'd to hardship, and the child of toil,  
Wont through the freezing show'r, the wintry storm,  
O'er his own glebe the tardy ox to goad,

Or in the sun's impetuous heat to glow  
 Beneath the burden of his yellow sheaves;  
 Whence on himself, on her whose faithful arms  
 Infold him joyful, on a growing race  
 Which glad his dwelling, plenty he bestows  
 With independence. When to battle call'd,  
 For them, his dearest comfort, and his care,  
 And for the harvest promis'd to his toil,  
 He lifts the shield, nor shuns unequal force.  
 Such are the troops of ev'ry state in Greece.  
 One only yields a breed more warlike still,  
 Of whom selected bands appear in sight,  
 All citizens of Sparta. They the glebe  
 Have never turn'd, nor bound the golden sheaf.  
 They are devoted to severer tasks,  
 For war alone, their sole delight and care.  
 From infancy to manhood they are train'd  
 To winter watches, to inclement skies,  
 To plunge through torrents, brave the tusky boar,  
 To arms and wounds; a discipline of pain  
 So fierce, so constant, that to them a camp,  
 With all its hardships, is a seat of rest,  
 And war itself remission from their toil.'

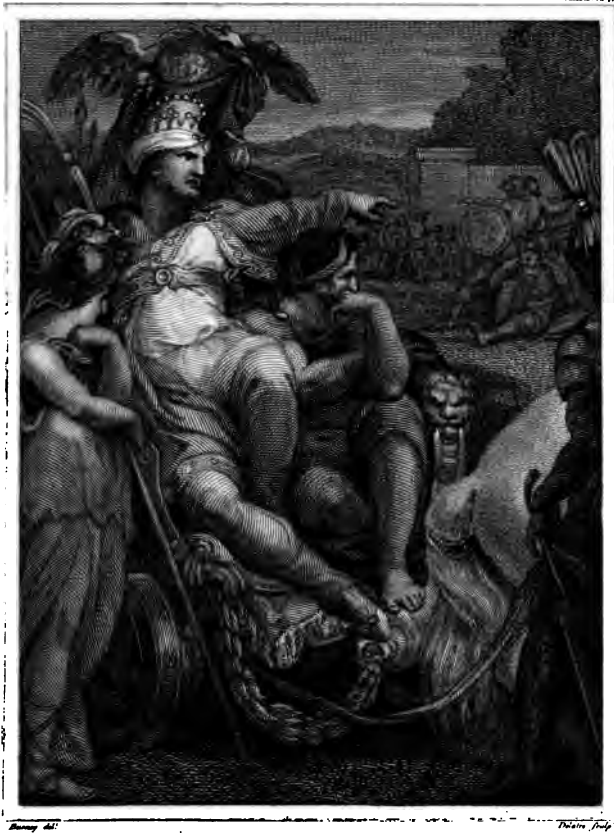
‘Thy words are folly,’ with redoubled scorn  
 Returns the monarch. ‘Doth not freedom dwell  
 Among the Spartans? Therefore will they shun  
 Superior foes. The unrestrain’d and free  
 Will fly from danger; while my vassals, born  
 To absolute controlment from their king,  
 Know, if th’ allotted station they desert,  
 The scourge awaits them, and my heavy wrath.’

To this the exile—‘O conceive not, prince,  
 That Spartans want an object where to fix  
 Their eyes in rev’rence, in obedient dread.  
 To them more awful, than the name of king  
 To Asia’s trembling millions, is the law;  
 Whose sacred voice enjoins them to confront  
 Unnumber’d foes; to vanquish, or to die.’

Here Demaratus pauses. Xerxes halts.  
 Its long defile Thermopylæ presents.  
 The satraps leave their cars. On foot they form  
 A splendid orb around their lord. By chance  
 The Spartans then compos’d th’ external guard.  
 They, in a martial exercise employ’d,

Heed not the monarch, or his gaudy train;  
 But poise the spear, protended, as in fight;  
 Or lift their adverse shields in single strife;  
 Or, trooping, forward rush, retreat and wheel  
 In ranks unbroken, and with equal feet:  
 While others, calm, beneath their polish'd helms  
 Draw down their hair, whose length of sable curls  
 O'erspread their necks with terror. Xerxes here  
 The exile questions—' What do these intend,  
 Who with assiduous hands adjust their hair?'

To whom the Spartan—' O imperial lord,  
 Such is their custom, to adorn their heads,  
 When full determin'd to encounter death.  
 Bring down thy nations in resplendent steel;  
 Arm, if thou canst, the gen'ral race of man,  
 All who possess the regions unexplor'd  
 Beyond the Ganges, all whose wand'ring steps  
 Above the Caspian range the Scythian wild,  
 With those who drink the secret fount of Nile;  
 Yet to Laconian bosoms shall dismay  
 Remain a stranger.' Fervour from his lips  
 Thus breaks aloud; when, gushing from his eyes,



Henry del.

Thom. Sculp.

——— Verres here  
*The vile questions. What do these intend,  
 Who with assiduous hands adjust their hair.*

Leonidas Peck. J.





Resistless grief o'erflows his cheeks. Aside  
 His head he turns. He weeps in copious streams.  
 The keen remembrance of his former state,  
 His dignity, his greatness, and the sight  
 Of those brave ranks, which thus unshaken stood,  
 And spread amazement through the world in arms,  
 Excite these sorrows. His impassion'd looks  
 Review the godlike warriors, who beneath  
 His standard once victorious fought; who call'd  
 Him once their king, their leader: then again,  
 O'ercharg'd with anguish, he bedews with tears  
 His rev'rend beard; in agony bemoans  
 His faded honours, his illustrious name,  
 Forgotten long, his majesty, defil'd  
 By exile, by dependence. So obscur'd  
 By sordid moss, and ivy's creeping leaf,  
 Some princely palace, or stupendous fane,  
 Magnificent in ruin, nods; where time  
 From under shelving architraves hath mow'd  
 The column down, and cleft the pond'rous dome.

Not unobserv'd by Hyperanthes, mourn'd  
 Th' unhappy Spartan. Kindly in his own  
 He press'd the exile's hand, and thus humane—

‘ O Demaratus, in this grief I see  
 How just thy praises of Laconia’s state.  
 Though cherish’d here with universal love,  
 Thou still deplor’st thy absence from her face,  
 Howe’er averse to thine. But swift relief  
 From indignation borrow. Call to mind  
 Thy injuries. Th’ auspicious fortune bless,  
 Which led thee far from calumny and fraud,  
 To peace, to honour, in the Persian court.’

As Demaratus, with a grateful mind,  
 His answer was preparing, Persia’s king  
 Stern interrupted—‘ Soon as morning shines,  
 Do you, Tigranes and Phraortes, head  
 The Medes and Cissians. Bring these Grecians bound.’

This said, the monarch to his camp returns.  
 Th’ attendant princes reascend their cars,  
 Save Hyperanthes, by the Carian queen  
 Detain’d, who thus began—‘ Impartial, brave,  
 Nurs’d in a court, yet virtuous, let my heart  
 To thee its feelings undisguis’d reveal.  
 Thou hear’st thy royal brother. He demands

These Grecians bound. Why stops his mandate there?  
 Why not command the mountains to remove,  
 Or sink to level plains. Yon Spartans view,  
 Their weighty arms, their countenance. To die  
 My gratitude instructs me in the cause  
 Of our imperial master. To succeed  
 Is not within the shadow of my hopes  
 At this dire pass. What evil genius sways?  
 Tigranes, false Argestes, and the rest,  
 In name a council, ceaseless have oppos'd  
 My dictates, oft repeated in despite  
 Of purpled flatt'ers, to embark a force,  
 Which, pouring on Laconia, might confine  
 These sons of valour to their own defence.  
 Vain are my words. The royal ear admits  
 Their sound alone; while adulation's notes  
 In Siren sweetness penetrate his heart,  
 There lodge ensnaring mischief.' In a sigh  
 To her the prince—' O faithful to thy lord,  
 Discreet adviser, and in action firm,  
 What can I answer? My afflicted soul  
 Must seek its refuge in a feeble hope.  
 Thou mayst be partial to thy Doric race,

Mayst magnify our danger. Let me hope,  
 Whate'er the danger; if extreme, believe  
 That Hyperanthes for his prince can bleed  
 Not with less zeal than Spartans for their laws.'

They separate. To Xerxes he repairs.  
 The queen, surrounded by the Carian guard,  
 Stays, and retraces with sagacious ken  
 The destin'd field of war, the vary'd space,  
 Its depth, its confines, both of hill and sea.  
 Meantime a scene more splendid hath allur'd  
 Her son's attention. His transported sight,  
 With ecstasy like worship, long pursues  
 The pomp of Xerxes in retreat, the throne,  
 Which shew'd their idol to the nations round,  
 The bounding steeds, caparison'd in gold,  
 The plumes, the chariots, standards. He excites  
 Her care, express'd in these pathetic strains—

' Look on the king with gratitude. His sire  
 Protected thine. Himself upholds our state.  
 By loyalty inflexible repay  
 The obligation. To immortal pow'rs

The adoration of thy soul confine;  
 And look undazzled on the pomp of man,  
 Most weak when highest. Then the jealous gods  
 Watch to supplant him. They his paths, his courts,  
 His chambers, fill with flatt'ry's pois'nous swarms,  
 Whose honey'd bane, by kingly pride devour'd,  
 Consumes the health of kingdoms.' Here the boy,  
 By an attention which surpass'd his years,  
 Unlocks her inmost bosom. 'Thrice accurs'd  
 Be those,' th' indignant heroine pursues,  
 'Those, who have tempted their imperial lord  
 To that prepost'rous arrogance, which cast  
 Chains in the deep to manacle the waves,  
 Chastis'd with stripes in heav'n's offended sight  
 The Hellespont, and fondly now demands  
 The Spartans bound. O child, my soul's delight,  
 Train'd by my care to equitable sway,  
 And imitation of the gods, by deeds  
 To merit their protection, heed my voice.  
 They, who alone can tame or swell the floods,  
 Compose the winds, or guide their strong career,  
 O'erwhelming human greatness, will confound  
 Such vanity in mortals. On our fleet

Their indignation hath already fall'n.  
 Perhaps our boasted army is prepar'd  
 A prey for death, to vindicate their pow'r.'

This said, a curious search in ev'ry part  
 Her eye renews. Adjoining to the straits,  
 Fresh bloom'd a thicket of entwining shrubs,  
 A seeming fence to some sequester'd ground,  
 By travellers unbeaten. Swift her guards  
 Address'd their spears to part the pliant boughs.  
 Held back, they yield a passage to the queen  
 And princely boy. Delicious to their sight,  
 Soft dales, meand'ring, shew their flow'ry laps  
 Among rude piles of nature. In their sides  
 Of rock are mansions hewn; nor loaden trees  
 Of cluster'd fruit are wanting: but no sound,  
 Except of brooks in murmur, and the song  
 Of winged warblers, meets the list'ning ear.  
 No grazing herd, no flock, nor human form,  
 Is seen; no careful husband at his toil;  
 Beside her threshold no industrious wife,  
 No playful child. Instructive to her son  
 The princess then—' Already these abodes

Are desolate. Once happy in their homes,  
 Th' inhabitants forsake them. Pleasing scene  
 Of nature's bounty, soon will savage Mars  
 Deform the lovely ringlets of thy shrubs,  
 And coarsely pluck thy violated fruits,  
 Unripe; will deafen, with his clangour fell,  
 Thy tuneful choirs. I mourn thy destin'd spoil,  
 Yet come thy first despoiler. Captains, plant,  
 Ere morning breaks, my secret standard here.  
 Come, boy, away. Thy safety will I trust  
 To Demaratus; while thy mother tries,  
 With these her martial followers, what sparks,  
 Left by our Doric fathers, yet inflame  
 Their sons and daughters in a stern debate  
 With other Dorians, who have never breath'd  
 The soft'ning gales of Asia, never bow'd  
 In forc'd allegiance to Barbarian thrones.  
 Thou heed my order. Those ingenuous looks  
 Of discontent suppress. For thee this fight  
 Were too severe a lesson. Thou might'st bleed  
 Among the thousands fated to expire  
 By Sparta's lance. Let Artemisia die,  
 Ye all disposing rulers, but protect



Her son.' She ceas'd. The lioness, who reigns  
 Queen of the forest, terrible in strength,  
 And prone to fury, thus, by nature taught,  
 Melts o'er her young in blandishment and love.

Now slowly tow'rd's the Persian camp her steps  
 In silence she directed; when a voice,  
 Sent from a rock, accessible which seem'd  
 To none but feather'd passengers of air,  
 By this reproof detain'd her—' Caria's queen  
 Art thou, to Greece by Doric blood ally'd?  
 Com'st thou to lay her fruitful meadows waste,  
 Thou homager of tyrants?' Upward gaz'd  
 Th' astonish'd princess. Lo! a female shape,  
 Tall and majestic, from th' impendent ridge  
 Look'd awful down. A holy fillet bound  
 Her graceful hair, loose flowing. Seldom wept  
 Great Artemisia. Now a springing tear  
 Between her eyelids gleam'd. ' Too true,' she sigh'd,  
 ' A homager of tyrants! Voice austere,  
 And presence half-divine!' Again the voice—

' O Artemisia, hide thy Doric sword.

Let no Barbarian tyrant through thy might,  
 Thy counsels, valiant as thou art and wise,  
 Consume the holy fanes, deface the tombs,  
 Subvert the laws, of Greece, her sons intrall.'

The queen made no reply. Her breastplate heav'd.  
 The tremulous attire of cov'ring mail  
 Confess'd her struggle. She at length exclaim'd—

' Olympian thund'rer, from thy neighb'ring hill,  
 Of sacred oaths remind me!' Then aside  
 She turns, to shun that majesty of form,  
 In solemn sounds upbraiding. Torn her thoughts  
 She feels. A painful conflict she endures,  
 With recollection of her Doric race;  
 All gratitude, reviving, arms her breast.  
 Her royal benefactor she recalls,  
 Back to his sight precipitates her steps.



# LEONIDAS.

BOOK V.

## THE ARGUMENT.

Leonidas, rising by break of day, hears the intelligence which Agis and Melibœus bring from the upper pass; then commands a body of Arcadians, with the Platæans and Thespians, to be drawn out for battle under the conduct of Demophilus in that part of Thermopylæ which lies close to the Phocian wall, from whence he harangues them. The enemy approaches. Diomedon kills Tigranes in single combat. Both armies join battle. Dithyrambus kills Phraortes. The Persians, entirely defeated, are pursued by Demophilus to the extremity of the pass. The Arcadians, inconsiderately advancing beyond it, fall into an ambush, which Artemisia had laid to cover the retreat of the Persians. She kills Clonius, but is herself repulsed by Demophilus. Diomedon and Dithyrambus give chase to her broken forces over the plains in the sight of Persia's camp, whence she receives no assistance. She rallies a small body, and, facing the enemy, disables Dithyrambus by a blow on his helmet. This puts the Grecians into some confusion, and gives her an opportunity of preserving the remainder of her Carians by a timely retreat. She gains the camp, accuses Argestes of treachery; but, pacified by Demaratus, is accompanied by him with a thousand horse to collect the dead bodies of her soldiers for sepulture.

# LEONIDAS.

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## BOOK V.

AURORA dawn'd. Leonidas arose.  
With Melibæus Agis, now return'd,  
Address'd the king—' Along the mountain's side  
We bent our journey. On our way a voice,  
Loud from a crag, on Melibæus call'd.  
He look'd and answer'd. Mycon, ancient friend !  
Far hast thou driv'n thy bearded train to day;  
But fortunate thy presence. None like thee,  
Inhabitant of Oeta from thy birth,  
Can furnish that intelligence which Greece  
Wants for her safety. Mycon shew'd a track.  
We mounted high. The summit, where we stopt,  
Gave to the sight a prospect wide o'er hills,  
O'er dales, and forests, rocks, and dashing floods  
In cataracts. The object of our search

Beneath us lay, the secret pass to Greece,  
 Where not five warriors in a rank can tread.  
 We thence descended to the Phocian camp,  
 Beset with scatter'd oaks, which rose and spread  
 In height and shade; on whose sustaining boughs  
 Were hung, in snowy folds, a thousand tents,  
 Containing each a Phocian, heavy-mail'd,  
 With two light-weapon'd menials. Northward ends  
 The vale, contracted to that narrow strait  
 Which first we saw with Mycon.' ' Prudent care  
 Like yours alleviates mine,' well-pleas'd, the king  
 Reply'd. ' Now, Agis, from Arcadia's bands  
 Select a thousand spears. To them unite  
 The Thespians and Plataeans. Draw their lines  
 Beneath the wall which fortifies the pass.  
 There, close-embod' d, will their might repulse  
 The num'rous foe. Demophilus salute.  
 Approv'd in martial service, him I name  
 The chief supreme.' Obedient to his will,  
 Th' appointed warriors, issuing from the tents,  
 Fill their deep files, and watch the high command.  
 So round their monarch, in his stormy hall,  
 The winds assemble. From his dusky throne

His dreadful mandates Æolus proclaims  
 To swell the main, or heav'n with clouds deform,  
 Or bend the forest from the mountain's brow.  
 Laconia's leader, from the rampart's height,  
 To battle thus the list'ning host inflames—

‘ This day, O Grecians, countrymen, and friends,  
 Your wives, your offspring, your paternal seats,  
 Your parents, country, liberty, and laws,  
 Demand your swords. You, gen'rous, active, brave,  
 Vers'd in the various discipline of Mars,  
 Are now to grapple with ignoble foes,  
 In war unskilful, nature's basest dross,  
 And thence a monarch's mercenary slaves.  
 Relax'd their limbs, their spirits are deprav'd  
 By eastern sloth and pleasures. Hire their cause,  
 Their only fruit of victory is spoil.  
 They know not freedom, nor its lib'ral cares.  
 Such is the flow'r of Asia's host. The rest,  
 Who fill her boasted numbers, are a crowd  
 Forc'd from their homes; a populace, in peace  
 By jealous tyranny disarm'd, in war  
 Their tyrant's victims. Taught in passive grief



To bear, the rapine, cruelty, and spurns,  
 Of Xerxes' mercenary band, they pine  
 In servitude to slaves. With terror sounds  
 The trumpet's clangour in their trembling ears.  
 Unwonted loads, the buckler and the lance,  
 Their hands sustain, encumber'd, and present  
 The mockery of war . . But ev'ry eye  
 Shoots forth impatient flames. Your gallant breasts  
 Too long their swelling spirit have confin'd.  
 Go then, ye sons of liberty; go, sweep  
 These bondmen from the field. Resistless, rend  
 The glitt'ring standard from their servile grasp.  
 Hurl to the ground their ignominious heads,  
 The warrior's helm profaning. Think the shades  
 Of your forefathers lift their sacred brows,  
 Here to enjoy the glory of their sons.'

He spake. Loud pæans issue from the Greeks.  
 In fierce reply, Barbarian shouts ascend  
 From hostile nations, thronging down the pass.  
 Such is the roar of Ætna, when his mouth  
 Displodes combustion from his sulph'rous depths,  
 To blast the smiles of nature. Dauntless stood,

In deep array, before the Phocian wall  
 The phalanx, wedg'd with implicated shields,  
 And spears protended; like the graceful range  
 Of arduous elms, whose interwoven boughs  
 Before some rural palace wide expand  
 Their venerable umbrage, to retard  
 The North's impetuous wing. As o'er the main,  
 In lucid rows, the rising waves reflect  
 The sun's effulgence; so the Grecian helms  
 Return'd his light, which o'er their convex pour'd  
 A splendour, scatter'd through the dancing plumes.

Down rush the foes. Exulting, in their van  
 Their haughty leader shakes his threat'ning lance,  
 Provoking battle. Instant from his rank  
 Diomedon bursts, furious. On he strides;  
 Confronts Tigranes, whom he thus defies—

' Now art thou met, Barbarian. Wouldst thou prove  
 Thy actions equal to thy vaunts, command  
 Thy troops to halt, while thou and I engage.'

Tigranes, turning to the Persians, spake—

'My friends and soldiers, check your martial haste,  
While my strong lance that Grecian's pride confounds.'

He ceas'd. In dreadful opposition soon  
Each combatant advanc'd. Their sinewy hands  
Grip'd fast their spears, high-brandish'd. Thrice they  
drove,

With well directed force, the pointed steel  
At either's throat, and thrice their wary shields  
Repel'd the menac'd wound. The Asian chief  
At length, with pow'rs collected for the stroke,  
His weapon rivets in the Grecian targe.

Aside Diomedon inclines, and shuns  
Approaching fate; then all his martial skill  
Undaunted summons. His forsaken spear  
Beside him cast, his falchion he unsheaths.

The blade descending on Tigranes' arm,  
That instant struggling to redeem his lance,  
The nervous hand dissevers. Pale affright  
Unmans the Persian; while his active foe  
Full on his neck discharg'd the rapid sword,  
Which open'd wide the purple gates of death.  
Low sinks Tigranes in eternal shade.

His prostrate limbs the conqueror bestrides;  
 Then, in a tuft of blood-distilling hair  
 His hand entwining, from the mangled trunk  
 The head disjoins, and whirls with matchless strength  
 Among the adverse legions. All in dread  
 Recoil'd, where'er the ghastly visage flew  
 In sanguine circles, and pursu'd its track  
 Of horror through the air. Not more amaz'd,  
 A barb'rous nation, whom the cheerful dawn  
 Of science ne'er illumin'd, view on high  
 A meteor, waving its portentous fires;  
 Where oft, as superstition vainly dreams,  
 Some demon sits amid the baneful blaze,  
 Dispersing plague and desolation round.  
 Awhile the stern Diomedon remain'd  
 Triumphant o'er the dire dismay, which froze  
 The heart of Persia; then, with haughty pace,  
 In sullen joy, among his gladsome friends  
 Resum'd his station. Still the hostile throng,  
 In consternation motionless, suspend  
 The charge. Their drooping hearts Phraortes warms—

‘Heav’n! can one leader’s fate appal this host,

Which counts a train of princes for its chiefs?  
 Behold Phraortes. From Niphates' ridge  
 I draw my subject files. My hardy toil  
 Through pathless woods and deserts hath explor'd  
 The tiger's cavern. This unconquer'd hand  
 Hath from the lion rent his shaggy hide.  
 So through this field of slaughter will I chase  
 Yon vaunting Greek.' His ardent words revive  
 Declining valour in the van. His lance  
 Then in the rear he brandishes. The crowd,  
 Before his threat'ning ire affrighted, roll  
 Their numbers headlong on the Grecian steel.  
 Thus, with his trident, ocean's angry god  
 From their vast bottom turns the mighty mass  
 Of waters upward, and o'erwhelms the beach.

Tremendous frown'd the fierce Plataean chief,  
 Full in the battle's front. His ample shield,  
 Like a strong bulwark, prominent he rais'd  
 Before the line. There thunder'd all the storm  
 Of darts and arrows. His undaunted train  
 In emulating ardour charg'd the foe.  
 Where'er they turn'd the formidable spears,

Which drench'd the glebe of Marathon in blood,  
 Barbarian dead lay heap'd. Diomedon  
 Led on the slaughter. From his nodding crest  
 The sable plumes shook terror. Asia's host  
 Shrunk back, as blasted by the piercing beams  
 Of that unconquerable sword which fell  
 With lightning's swiftmess on dissever'd helms,  
 And, menacing Tigranes' doom to all,  
 Their multitude dispers'd. The furious chief,  
 Encompass'd round by carnage, and besmear'd  
 With sanguine drops, inflames his warlike friends—

‘ O Dithyrambus, let thy deeds this day  
 Surmount their wonted lustre. Thou in arms,  
 Demophilus, worn grey, thy youth recall.  
 Behold, these slaves without resistance bleed.  
 Advance, my hoary friend. Propitious fame  
 Smiles on thy years. She grants thy aged hand  
 To pluck fresh laurels for thy honour'd brow.’

As, when endu'd with Promethēan heat,  
 The molten clay respir'd, a sudden warmth  
 Glows in the venerable Thespian's veins;

In ev'ry sinew new-born vigour swells.  
 His falchion, thund'ring on Cherasmes' helm,  
 The forehead cleaves. Ecbatana to war  
 Sent forth Cherasmes. From her potent gates  
 He, proud in hope, her swarming numbers led.  
 Him Ariazus and Peucestes join'd,  
 His martial brothers. They attend his fate,  
 By Dithyrambus pierc'd. Their hoary sire  
 Shall o'er his solitary palace roam;  
 Lamenting loud his childless years, shall curse  
 Ambition's fury, and the lust of war;  
 Then, pining, bow in anguish to the grave.

Next, by the fierce Plataean's fatal sword,  
 Expir'd Damates, once the host and friend  
 Of fall'n Tigranes. By his side to fight,  
 He left his native bands. Of Syrian birth,  
 In Daphné he resided, near the grove  
 Whose hospitable laurels, in their shade,  
 Conceal'd the virgin fugitive, averse  
 To young Apollo. Hither she retir'd,  
 Far from her parent stream. Here fables feign,  
 Herself a laurel, chang'd her golden hair

To verdant leaves in this retreat, the grove  
 Of Daphné call'd, the seat of rural bliss,  
 Fann'd by the breath of Zephyrs, and with rills  
 From bubbling founts irriguous, Syria's boast,  
 The happy rival of Thessalia's vale;  
 Now hid for'ever from Damates' eyes.

Demophilus, wise leader, soon improves  
 Advantage. All the vet'rans of his troop,  
 In age his equals, to condense the files,  
 To rivet close their bucklers, he commands.  
 As some broad vessel, heavy in her strength,  
 But well compacted, when a fav'ring gale  
 Invites the skilful master to expand  
 The sails at large, her slow but steady course  
 Impels through myriads of dividing waves;  
 So, unresisted, through Barbarian throngs  
 The hoary phalanx pass'd. Arcadia's sons  
 Pursu'd more swift. Gigantic Clonius press'd  
 The yielding Persians, who before him sunk,  
 Crush'd, like vile stubble underneath the steps  
 Of some glad peasant, visiting his fields  
 Of new-shorn harvest. On the gen'ral rout



Phraortes look'd intrepid still. He sprang  
 O'er hills of carnage to confront the foe.  
 His own inglorious friends he thus reproach'd—

‘ Fly then, ye cowards, and desert your chief.  
 Yet, single, here my target shall oppose  
 The shock of thousands.’ Raging, he impels  
 His deathful point through Aristander’s breast.  
 Him Dithyrambus lov’d. A sacred bard,  
 Rever’d for justice, for his verse renown’d,  
 He sung the deeds of heroes; those who fell,  
 Or those who conquer’d, in their country’s cause;  
 Th’ enraptur’d soul inspiring with the love  
 Of glory, earn’d by virtue. His high strain  
 The Muses favour’d from their neighb’ring bow’rs,  
 And bless’d with heav’nly melody his lyre.  
 No more from Thespia shall his feet ascend  
 The shady steep of Helicon; no more  
 The stream divine of Aganippe’s fount  
 Bedew his lip, harmonious; nor his hands,  
 Which, dying, grasp the unforsaken lance,  
 And prostrate buckler, ever more accord  
 His lofty numbers to the sounding shell.

Lo! Dithyrambus weeps! Amid the rage  
 Of war and conquest, swiftly-gushing tears  
 Find one sad moment's interval to fall  
 On his pale friend. But soon the victor proves  
 His stern revenge. Through shield and corselet plung'd,  
 His forceful blade divides the Persian's chest;  
 Whence issue streams of royal blood, deriv'd  
 From ancestors who sway'd in Ninus old  
 Th' Assyrian sceptre. He to Xerxes' throne  
 A tributary satrap, rul'd the vales  
 Where Tigris swift, between the parted hills  
 Of tall Niphates, drew his foamy tide,  
 Impregnating the meads. Phraortes sinks,  
 Not instantly expiring. Still his eyes  
 Flash indignation, while the Persians fly.

Beyond the Malian entrance of the straits  
 Th' Arcadians rush; when, unperceiv'd till felt,  
 Spring, from concealment in a thicket deep,  
 New swarms of warriors, clust'ring on the flank  
 Of these unwary Grecians. Tow'rd the bay  
 They shrink. They totter on the fearful edge,  
 Which overhangs a precipice. Surpris'd,

The strength of Clonius fails. His giant bulk  
Beneath the chieftain of th' assailing band  
Falls prostrate. Thespians and Plataeans wave  
Auxiliar ensigns. They encounter foes  
Resembling Greeks in discipline and arms.  
Dire is the shock. What less than Caria's queen,  
In their career of victory, could check  
Such warriors? Fierce she struggles; while the rout  
Of Medes and Cissians carry to the camp  
Contagious terror; thence no succour flows.  
Demophilus stands firm; the Carian band  
At length recoil before him. Keen pursuit  
He leaves to others, like th' almighty sire,  
Who sits unshaken on his throne, while floods,  
His instruments of wrath, o'erwhelm the earth,  
And whirlwinds level on her hills the growth  
Of proudest cedars. Through the yielding crowd,  
Plataea's chief and Dithyrambus range,  
Triumphant, side by side. Thus o'er the field  
Where bright Alpheus heard the rattling car,  
And concave hoof along his echoing banks,  
Two gen'rous coursers, link'd in mutual reins,  
In speed, in ardour equal, beat the dust

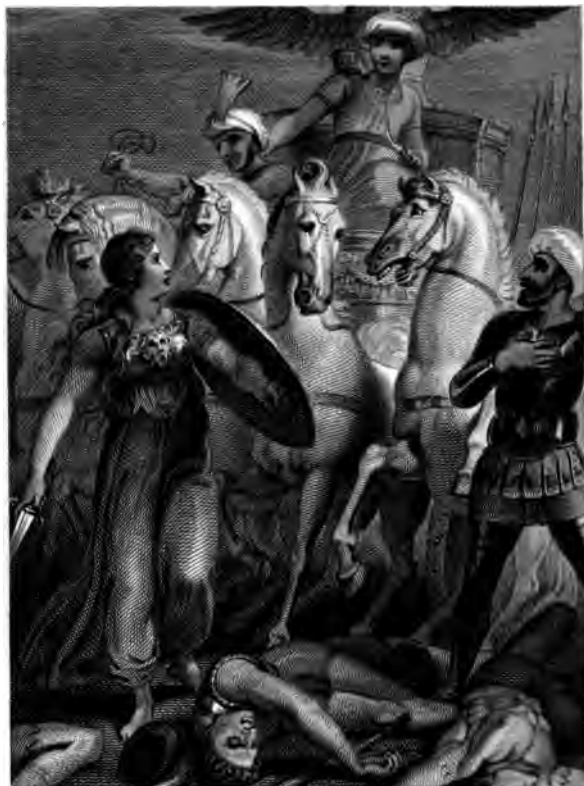
To reach the glories of Olympia's goal.  
 Th' intrepid heroes on the plain advance,  
 They press the Carian rear. Not long the queen  
 Endures that shame. Her people's dying groans  
 Transpierce her bosom. On their bleeding limbs  
 She looks maternal, feels maternal pangs.  
 A troop she rallies. Goddess-like, she turns,  
 Not less than Pallas with her Gorgon shield.  
 Whole ranks she covers, like th' imperial bird,  
 Extending o'er a nest of callow young  
 Her pinion broad, and pointing fierce her beak,  
 Her claws outstretch'd. The Thespian's ardent hand,  
 From common lives refraining, hastes to snatch  
 More splendid laurels from that nobler head.  
 His pond'rous falchion, swift descending, bears  
 Her buckler down; thence glancing, cuts the thong  
 Which holds her headpiece fast. That golden fence  
 Drops down. Thick tresses, unconfin'd, disclose  
 A female warrior; one, whose summer pride  
 Of fleeting beauty had begun to fade,  
 Yet by th' heroic character supply'd,  
 Which grew more awful, as the touch of time  
 Remov'd the soft'ning graces. Back he steps,

Unman'd by wonder. With indignant eyes,  
 Fire-darting, she advances. Both her hands  
 Full on his crest discharge the furious blade.  
 The forceful blow compels him to recede  
 Yet further back, unwounded, though confus'd.  
 His soldiers flock around him. From a scene  
 Of blood more distant speeds Platæa's chief.  
 The fair occasion of suspended fight  
 She seizes, bright in glory wheels away,  
 And saves her Carian remnant. While his friend  
 In fervent sounds Diomedon bespake—

‘ If thou art slain, I curse this glorious day.  
 Be all thy trophies, be my own, accurs'd.’

The youth, recover'd, answers in a smile—  
 ‘ I am unhurt. The weighty blow proclaim'd  
 The queen of Caria, or Bellona's arm.  
 Our longer stay Demophilus may blame.  
 Let us prevent his call.’ This said, their steps  
 They turn, both striding through empurpled heaps  
 Of arms, and mangled slain, themselves with gore  
 Distain'd; like two grim tigers, who have forc'd  
 A nightly mansion, on the desert rais'd





T. Stothard del. Scot.

J. Mordaunt sculp.

*Side around are seen  
 • All faint, all ghastly from repeated wounds  
 Her bleeding soldiers. • Brandishing her sword,  
 • To them she points, to • Verres thus she speaks*

Veronica Paul F

By some lone-wand'ring traveller, then, dy'd  
 In human crimson, through the forest deep  
 Back to their covert's dreary gloom retire.

Stern Artemisia, sweeping o'er the field,  
 Bursts into Asia's camp. A furious look  
 She casts around. Abrocomes remote  
 With Hyperanthes from the king were sent.  
 She sees Argestes in that quarter chief,  
 Who from battalions numberless had spar'd  
 Not one to succour, but his malice gorg'd  
 With her distress. Her anger now augments.  
 Revenge frowns gloomy on her darken'd brow.  
 He cautious moves to Xerxes, where he sat  
 High on his car. She follows. Lost her helm;  
 Resign'd to sportive winds her cluster'd locks,  
 Wild, but majestic, like the waving boughs  
 Of some proud elm, the glory of the grove,  
 And full in foliage. Her emblazon'd shield  
 With gore is tarnish'd. Pale around are seen,  
 All faint, all ghastly from repeated wounds,  
 Her bleeding soldiers. Brandishing her sword,  
 To them she points, to Xerxes thus she speaks—



' Behold these mangled Carians, who have spent  
 Their vital current in the king's defence,  
 Ev'n in his sight; while Medes and Cissians fled,  
 By these protected, whom Argestes saw  
 Pursu'd by slaughter to thy very camp,  
 Yet left unhelp'd to perish. Ruling sire,  
 Let Horomazes be thy name, or Jove,  
 To thee appealing, of the king I claim  
 A day for justice. Monarch, to my arm  
 Give him a prey. Let Artemisia's truth  
 Chastise his treason.' With an eye submiss,  
 A mien obsequious, and a soothing tone,  
 To cheat the king, to moderate her ire,  
 Argestes utters these fallacious words—

' May Horomazes leave the fiend at large  
 To blast my earthly happiness, confine  
 Amid the horrors of his own abode  
 My ghost hereafter, if the sacred charge  
 Of Xerxes' person was not my restraint,  
 My sole restraint! To him our all is due;  
 Our all how trifling, with his safety weigh'd!  
 His preservation I prefer to fame,

And bright occasion for immortal deeds  
 Forego in duty. Else my helpful sword,  
 Fair heroine of Asia, hadst thou seen  
 Among the foremost blazing. Lo! the king  
 A royal present will on thee bestow,  
 Perfumes and precious unguents on the dead,  
 A golden wreath to each survivor brave.'

Aw'd by her spirit, by the flatt'rer's spell  
 Deluded, languid through dismay and shame  
 At his defeat, the monarch for a time  
 Sat mute, at length unlock'd his falt'ring lips—

'Thou hear'st, great princess. Rest content. His  
 words  
 I ratify. Yet, farther, I proclaim  
 Thee of my train first counsellor and chief.'

'O eagle-ey'd discernment in the king!  
 O wisdom equal to his boundless power!  
 The purpled sycophant exclaims. 'Thou seest  
 Her matchless talents. Wanting her, thy fleet,  
 The floating bulwark of our hopes, laments,

Foil'd in her absence, in her conduct safe.  
 Thy penetrating sight directs the field;  
 There let her worth be hazarded no more.'

' Thy words are wise,' the blinded prince rejoins.  
 ' Return, brave Carian, to thy naval charge.'

Thus, to remove her from the royal ear,  
 Malicious guile prevails. Redoubled rage  
 Swells in her bosom. Demaratus sees,  
 And calms the storm, by rend'ring up his charge  
 To her maternal hand. Her son, belov'd,  
 Dispels the furies. Then the Spartan thus—

' O Artemisia, of the king's command  
 Be thou observant. To thy slaughter'd friends  
 Immediate care, far other than revenge,  
 Is due. The ravens gather. From his nest  
 Among those clifts, the eagle's rapid flight  
 Denotes his scent of carnage. Thou, a Greek,  
 Well know'st the duty sacred to the dead.  
 Depart; thy guide is piety. Collect,  
 For honourable sepulchers prepare,

Those bodies, mark'd with honourable wounds.  
 I will assist thee. Xerxes will intrust  
 To my command a chosen guard of horse.'

As oft, when storms in summer have o'ercast  
 The night with double darkness, only pierc'd  
 By heav'n's blue fire, while thunder shakes the pole,  
 The orient sun, diffusing genial warmth,  
 Refines the troubled air; the blast is mute;  
 Death-pointed flames disperse; and placid Jove  
 Looks down in smiles: so prudence from the lips  
 Of Demaratus, by his tone, his mien,  
 His aspect strength'ning smooth persuasion's flow,  
 Compos'd her spirit. She with him departs.  
 The king assigns a thousand horse to guard  
 Th' illustrious exile and heroic dame.



# LEONIDAS.

BOOK VI.

## THE ARGUMENT.

The Grecian commanders, after the pursuit, retire for refreshment to a cave in the side of mount Oeta. Demophilus returns to the camp; Diomedon remains in the cave; while Dithyrambus, discovering a passage through it, ascends to the temple of the Muses. After a long discourse with Melissa, the daughter of Oïleus, she intrusts him with a solemn message to Leonidas. Dithyrambus deposes this charge to Megistias, the augur. Leonidas, recalling the forces first engaged, sends down a fresh body. Diomedon and Dithyrambus are permitted, on their own request, to continue in the field with the Platæans. By the advice of Diomedon, the Grecians advance to the broadest part of Thermopylæ, where they form a line of twenty in depth, consisting of the Platæans, Mantineans, Tegeans, Thebans, Corinthians, Phliasians, and Mycenæans. The Spartans compose a second line in a narrower part. Behind them are placed the light armed troops under Alpheus, and further back a phalanx of Locrians under Medon, the son of Oïleus. Dieneces commands the whole.

# LEONIDAS.

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## BOOK VI.

Now Dithyrambus and Plataea's chief,  
Their former post attaining, had rejoin'd  
Demophilus. Recumbent on his shield,  
Phraortes, gasping there, attracts their sight.  
To him in pity Thespia's gallant youth,  
Approaching, thus his gen'rous soul express'd—

‘ Liv'st thou, brave Persian? By propitious Jove,  
From whom the pleasing stream of mercy flows  
Through mortal bosoms, less my soul rejoic'd,  
When fortune bless'd with victory my arm,  
Than now to raise thee from this field of death.’

His languid eyes the dying prince unclos'd,  
Then with expiring voice—‘ Vain man, forbear



To proffer me what soon thyself must crave.  
 The day is quite extinguish'd in these orbs.  
 One moment fate allows me to disdain  
 Thy mercy, Grecian. Now I yield to death.'

This effort made, the haughty spirit fled.  
 So shoots a meteor's transitory gleam  
 Through nitrous folds of black nocturnal clouds,  
 Then dissipates for ever. O'er the corse  
 His rev'rend face Demophilus inclin'd,  
 Pois'd on his lance, and thus address'd the slain—

' Alas! how glorious were that bleeding breast,  
 Had justice brac'd the buckler on thy arm,  
 And to preserve a people bade thee die!  
 Who now shall mourn thee? Thy ungrateful king  
 Will soon forget thy worth. Thy native land  
 May raise an empty monument, but feel  
 No public sorrow. Thy recorded name  
 Shall wake among thy countrymen no sighs  
 For their lost hero. What to them avail'd  
 Thy might, thy dauntless spirit? Not to guard  
 Their wives, their offspring, from th' oppressor's hand,

But to extend oppression, didst thou fall,  
 Perhaps with inborn virtues in thy soul,  
 Which, but thy froward destiny forbade,  
 By freedom cherish'd, might have bless'd mankind.  
 All-bounteous nature, thy impartial laws  
 To no selected race of men confine  
 The sense of glory, fortitude, and all  
 The nobler passions, which exalt the mind,  
 And render life illustrious. These thou plant'st  
 In ev'ry soil. But freedom, like the sun,  
 Must warm the gen'rous seeds. By her alone  
 They bloom, they flourish; while oppression blasts  
 The tender virtues: hence a spurious growth,  
 False honour, savage valour, taint the soul,  
 And wild-ambition: hence rapacious pow'r  
 The ravag'd earth unpeoples, and the brave,  
 A feast for dogs, th' ensanguin'd field bestrew.'

He said. Around the venerable man  
 The warriors throng'd, attentive. Conquest hush'd  
 Its joyful transports. O'er the horrid field,  
 Rude scene so late of tumult, all was calm.  
 So, when the song of Thracian Orpheus drew

To Hebrus' margin, from their dreary seats,  
 The savage breed which Hæmus, wrapt in clouds,  
 Pangæus cold, and Rhodopean snows,  
 In blood and discord nurs'd, the soothing strain  
 Flow'd with enchantment through the ravish'd ear,  
 Their fierceness melted, and, amaz'd, they learn'd  
 The sacred laws of justice, which the bard  
 Mix'd with the music of his heav'nly string.

Meantime th' Arcadians, with inverted arms  
 And banners, sad and solemn, on their shields  
 The giant limbs of Clonius bore along,  
 To spread a gen'ral wo. The noble corse,  
 Dire spectacle of carnage, passing by  
 To those last honours which the dead partake,  
 Struck Dithyrambus. Swift his melted eye  
 Review'd Phraortes on the rock supine;  
 Then on the sage Demophilus he look'd  
 Intent, and spake—' My heart retains thy words.  
 This hour may witness how rapacious pow'r  
 The earth unpeoples. Clonius is no more.  
 But he, by Greece lamented, will acquire  
 A signal tomb. This gallant Persian, crush'd

Beneath my fortune, bath'd in blood, still warm,  
 May lie forgotten by his thankless king;  
 Yet not by me neglected shall remain  
 A naked corse.' The good old man replies—

‘ My gen'rous child, deserving that success  
 Thy arm hath gain'd! When vital breath is fled,  
 Our friends, our foes, are equal dust. Both claim  
 The fun'ral passage to that future seat  
 Of being, where no enmity revives.  
 There Greek and Persian will together quaff  
 In amaranthine bow'rs the cup of bliss  
 Immortal. Him, thy valour slew on earth,  
 In that bless'd region thou mayst find a friend.'

This said, the ready Thespians he commands  
 To lift Phraortes from his bed of death,  
 Th' empurpled rock. Outstretch'd, on targets broad,  
 Sustain'd by hands late hostile, now humane,  
 He follows Clonius to the fun'ral pyre.

A cave, not distant from the Phocian wall,  
 Through Oeta's cloven side, had nature form'd,

In spacious windings. This in moss she clad;  
 O'er half the entrance, downward from the roots,  
 She hung the shaggy trunks of branching firs,  
 To heav'n's hot ray impervious. Near the mouth  
 Relucent laurels spread before the sun  
 A broad and vivid foliage. High above  
 The hill was darken'd by a solemn shade,  
 Diffus'd from ancient cedars. To this cave  
 Diomedon, Demophilus resort,  
 And Thespia's youth. A deep recess appears,  
 Cool as the azure grot where Thetis sleeps  
 Beneath the vaulted ocean. Whisper'd sounds  
 Of waters, trilling from the riven stone  
 To feed a fountain on the rocky floor,  
 In purest streams o'erflowing to the sea,  
 Allure the warriors, hot with toil and thirst,  
 To this retreat serene. Against the sides  
 Their disencumber'd hands repose their shields;  
 The helms they loosen from their glowing cheeks;  
 Propt on their spears, they rest: when Agis brings  
 From Lacedæmon's leader these commands—

‘ Leonidas recalls you from your toils,

Ye meritorious Grecians. You have reap'd  
 The first bright harvest on the field of fame.  
 Our eyes in wonder, from the Phocian wall,  
 On your unequall'd deeds incessant gaz'd.'

To whom Plataea's chief—' Go, Agis, say  
 To Lacedæmon's ruler that, untir'd,  
 Diomedon can yet exalt his spear,  
 Nor feels the armour heavy on his limbs.  
 Then shall I quit the contest? Ere he sinks,  
 Shall not this early sun again behold  
 The slaves of Xerxes tremble at my lance,  
 Should they adventure on a fresh assault?'

To him the Thespian youth—' My friend, my guide  
 To noble actions, since thy gen'rous heart,  
 Intent on fame, disdains to rest, O grant  
 I too thy glorious labours may partake,  
 May learn once more to imitate thy deeds.  
 Thou, gentlest Agis, Sparta's king entreat  
 Not to command us from the field of war.'

' Yes, persevering heroes,' he reply'd,

' I will return, will Sparta's king entreat  
Not to command you from the field of war.'

Then interpos'd Demophilus—' O friend,  
Who lead'st to conquest brave Plataea's sons;  
Thou too, lov'd offspring of the dearest man,  
Who dost restore a brother to my eyes;  
My soul your magnanimity applauds:  
But, O reflect that unabating toil  
Subdues the mightiest! Valour will repine  
When the weak hand obeys the heart no more.  
Yet I declining through the weight of years,  
Will not assign a measure to your strength.  
If still you find your vigour undecay'd,  
Stay, and augment your glory. So, when time  
Casts from your whiten'd heads the helm aside,  
When in the temples your enfeebled arms  
Have hung their consecrated shields, the land  
Which gave you life, in her defence employ'd,  
Shall then by honours, doubled on your age,  
Requite the gen'rous labours of your prime.'

So spake the senior, and forsook the cave.

But from the fount Diomedon receives  
 Th' o'erflowing waters in his concave helm,  
 Addressing thus the genius of the stream—

‘ Whoe’er thou art, divinity unstain’d  
 Of this fair fountain, till unsparing Mars  
 Heap’d carnage round thee, bounteous are thy streams  
 To me, who ill repay thee. I again  
 Thy silver-gleaming current must pollute,  
 Which, mix’d with gore, shall tinge the Malian slime.’

He said, and lifted in his brimming casque  
 The bright refreshing moisture. Thus repairs  
 The spotted panther to Hydaspes’ side,  
 Or eastern Indus, feasted on the blood  
 Of some torn deer, which nigh his cruel grasp  
 Had roam’d, unheeding, in the secret shade;  
 Rapacious o’er the humid brink he stoops,  
 And in the pure and fluid crystal cools  
 His reeking jaws. Meantime the Thespian’s eye  
 Roves round the vaulted space; when sudden sounds  
 Of music, utter’d by melodious harps  
 And melting voices, distant, but in tones



By distance soften'd, while the echoes sigh'd  
 In lulling replication, fill the vault  
 With harmony. In admiration mute,  
 With nerves unbrac'd by rapture, he, entranc'd,  
 Stands like an eagle, when his parting plumes  
 The balm of sleep relaxes, and his wings  
 Fall from his languid side. Platæa's chief,  
 Observing, rous'd the warrior. ' Son of Mars,  
 Shall music's softness from thy bosom steal  
 The sense of glory? From his neighb'ring camp  
 Perhaps the Persian sends fresh nations down.  
 Soon in bright steel Thermopylæ will blaze.  
 Awake! Accustom'd to the clang of arms,  
 Intent on vengeance for invaded Greece,  
 My ear, my spirit, in this hour admit  
 No new sensation, nor a change of thought.'

The Thespian, starting from oblivious sloth  
 Of ravishment and wonder, quick reply'd—

' These sounds were more than human. Hark !

Again!

O honour'd friend, no adverse banner streams

In sight. No shout proclaims the Persian freed  
 From his late terror. Deeper let us plunge  
 In this mysterious dwelling of the nymphs,  
 Whose voices charm its gloom.' In smiles rejoin'd  
 Diomedon—' I see thy soul inthrall'd.  
 Me thou wouldst rank among th' unletter'd rout  
 Of yon Barbarians, should I press thy stay.  
 Time favours too. Till Agis be return'd  
 We cannot act. Indulge thy eager search.  
 Here will I wait, a centinel unmov'd,  
 To watch thy coming.' In exploring haste  
 Th' impatient Thespian penetrates the cave.  
 He finds it bounded by a steep ascent  
 Of rugged steps; where, down the hollow rock,  
 A modulation clear, distinct, and slow,  
 In movement solemn, from a lyric string,  
 Dissolves the stagnant air to sweet accord  
 With these sonorous lays. Celestial maids!  
 While, from our cliffs contemplating the war,  
 We celebrate our heroes, O impart  
 Orphëan magic to the pious strain!  
 That from the mountain we may call the groves;  
 Swift motion through these marble fragments breathe,

To overleap the high Oetæan ridge,  
And crush the fell invaders of our peace.

The animated hero upward springs,  
Light as a kindled vapour, which, confin'd  
In subterranean cavities, at length  
Pervading, rives the surface, to enlarge  
The long imprison'd flame. Ascending soon,  
He sees, he stands abash'd, then rev'rent kneels.

An aged temple, with insculptur'd forms  
Of Jove's harmonious daughters, and a train  
Of nine bright virgins, round their priestess rang'd,  
Who stood in awful majesty, receive  
His unexpected feet. The song is hush'd.  
The measur'd movement on the lyric chord  
In faint vibration dies. The priestess sage,  
Whose elevated port and aspect rose  
To more than mortal dignity, her lyre  
Consigning graceful to attendant hands,  
Looks with reproof. The loose, uncover'd hair  
Shades his inclining forehead; while a flush  
Of modest crimson dyes his youthful cheek.

Her pensive visage softens to a smile  
 On worth so blooming, which she thus accosts—

‘ I should reprove thee, inadvertent youth,  
 Who, through the sole access by nature left  
 To this pure mansion, with intruding steps  
 Dost interrupt our lays. But rise. Thy sword  
 Perhaps embellish’d that triumphant scene  
 Which wak’d these harps to celebrating notes.  
 What is the impress on thy warlike shield ?’

‘ A golden eagle on my shield I bear,’  
 Still bending low, he answers. She pursues—

‘ Art thou possessor of that glorious orb,  
 By me distinguish’d in the late defeat  
 Of Asia, driv’n before thee? Speak thy name.  
 Who is thy sire? Where lies thy native seat?  
 Com’st thou for glory to this fatal spot,  
 Or from Barbarian violence to guard  
 A parent’s age, a spouse, and tender babes,  
 Who call thee father?’ Humbly he again—

' I am of Thespia, Dithyrambus nam'd,  
 The son of Harmatides. Snatch'd by fate,  
 He to his brother, and my second sire,  
 Demophilus, consign'd me. Thespia's sons  
 By him are led. His dictates I obey;  
 Him to resemble strive. No infant voice  
 Calls me a father. To the nuptial vow  
 I am a stranger, and among the Greeks  
 The least entitled to thy partial praise.'

' None more entitled,' interpos'd the dame.  
 ' Deserving hero! thy demeanour speaks,  
 It justifies the fame, so widely spread,  
 Of Harmatides' heir. O grace and pride  
 Of that fair city, which the Muses love,  
 Thee an accepted visitant I hail  
 In this their ancient temple! Thou shalt view  
 Their sacred haunts.' Descending from the dome,  
 She thus pursues—' First, know my youthful hours  
 Were exercis'd in knowledge. Homer's Muse  
 To daily meditation won my soul,  
 With my young spirit mix'd undying sparks  
 Of her own rapture. By a father sage

Conducted, cities, manners, men I saw,  
 Their institutes and customs. I return'd.  
 The voice of Locris call'd me to sustain  
 The holy function here. Now throw thy sight  
 Across that meadow, whose enliven'd blades  
 Wave in the breeze, and glisten in the sun  
 Behind the hoary fane. My bleating train  
 Are nourish'd there, a spot of plenty, spar'd  
 From this surrounding wilderness. Remark  
 That fluid mirror, edg'd by shrubs and flow'rs;  
 Shrubs of my culture, flow'rs by Iris dress'd.  
 Nor pass that smiling concave in the hill,  
 Whose pointed crags are soften'd to the sight  
 By figs and grapes.' She pauses; while around  
 His eye, delighted, roves; in more delight  
 Soon to the spot returning, where she stood  
 A deity in semblance, o'er the place  
 Presiding awful, as Minerva wise,  
 August like Juno, like Diana pure,  
 But not more pure than fair. The beauteous lake,  
 The pines wide-branching, falls of water clear,  
 The multifarious glow on Flora's lap,  
 Lose all attraction, as her gracious lips

The hour is come to prove thy gen'rous heart;  
 That in thy hand, not ill-intrusted, shine  
 The spear and buckler, to maintain the cause  
 Of thy protectress. Let thy mind recall  
 Leonidas. On yonder bulwark plac'd,  
 He overlooks the battle; he discerns  
 The bold and fearful. May the gods I serve  
 Grant me to hear Leonidas approve  
 My son! No other boon my age implores.'

The augur paus'd. The animated cheek  
 Of Menalippus glows. His eager look  
 Demands the fight. This struck the tender sire,  
 Who then with moisten'd eyes—' Remember too  
 A father sees thy danger. Oh! my child,  
 To me thy honour, as to thee, is dear;  
 Yet court not death. By ev'ry filial tie,  
 By all my fondness, all my cares, I sue!  
 Amid the conflict, or the warm pursuit,  
 Still by the wise Dieneces abide.  
 His prudent valour knows th' unerring paths  
 Of glory. He admits thee to his side.  
 He will direct thy ardour. Go.' They part.

Megistias, turning, is accosted thus  
 By Dithyrambus—' Venerable seer,  
 So may that son, whose merit I esteem,  
 Whose precious head in peril I would die  
 To guard, return in triumph to thy breast,  
 As thou deliver'st to Laconia's king  
 A high and solemn message. While anew  
 The line is forming, from th' embattled field  
 I must not stray, uncall'd. A sacred charge  
 Through hallow'd lips will best approach the king.'

The Acarnanian in suspense remains  
 And silence. Dithyrambus quick relates  
 Melissa's words, describes the holy grot,  
 Then quits th' instructed augur, and attends  
 Diomedon's loud call. That fervid chief  
 Was reassuming his distinguish'd arms,  
 Which, as a splendid recompense, he bore  
 From grateful Athens, for achievements bold,  
 When he with brave Miltiades redeem'd  
 Her domes from Asian flames. The sculptur'd helm  
 Enclos'd his manly temples. From on high  
 A four-fold plumage nodded; while beneath



A golden dragon, with effulgent scales,  
 Itself the crest, shot terror. On his arm  
 He brac'd his buckler. Bord'ring on the rim,  
 Gorgonian serpents twin'd. Within, the form  
 Of Pallas, martial goddess, was emboss'd.  
 Low as her feet the graceful tunic flow'd.  
 Betwixt two griffins, on her helmet, sat  
 A sphynx, with wings expanded; while the face  
 Of dire Medusa on her breastplate frown'd.  
 One hand supports a javelin, which confounds  
 The pride of kings. The other leads along  
 A blooming virgin, Victory, whose brow  
 A wreath encircles. Laurels she presents;  
 But from her shoulders all her plumes were shorn,  
 In favour'd Athens ever now to rest.  
 This dread of Asia on his mighty arm  
 Diomedon uprear'd. He snatch'd his lance,  
 Then spake to Dithyrambus—' See, my friend,  
 Alone, of all the Grecians who sustain'd  
 The former onset, inexhausted stand  
 Plataea's sons. They well may keep the field,  
 Who with unslacken'd nerves endur'd that day  
 Which saw ten myriads of Barbarians driv'n

Back to their ships, and Athens left secure.  
 Charge in our line. Amid the foremost rank  
 Thy valour shall be plac'd, to share command,  
 And ev'ry honour with Plataea's chief.'

He said no more, but tow'rd's the Grecian van,  
 Impetuous, ardent, strode. Nor slow behind,  
 The pride of Thespia, Dithyrambus mov'd,  
 Like youthful Hermes in celestial arms;  
 When lightly, graceful, with his feather'd feet,  
 Along Scamander's flow'ry verge he pass'd  
 To aid th' incens'd divinities of Greece  
 Against the Phrygian tow'rs. Their eager haste  
 Soon brings the heroes to th' embattling ranks,  
 Whom thus the brave Diomedon exhorts—

' Not to contend, but vanquish, are ye come.  
 Here, in the blood of fugitives, your spears  
 Shall, unoppos'd, be stain'd. My valiant friends,  
 But chief, ye men of Sparta, view that space,  
 Where from the Malian gulph more distant rise  
 Th' Oetæan rocks, and less confine the straits.

There if we range, extending wide our front,  
An ampler scope to havock will be giv'n.'

To him Dienece. 'Plataean friend,  
Well dost thou counsel. On that wid'ning ground,  
Close to the mountain, place thy vet'ran files.  
Proportion'd numbers from thy right shall stretch  
Quite to the shore, in phalanx deep, like thine.  
The Spartans, wedg'd in this contracted part,  
Will I contain. Behind me Alpheus waits  
With lighter bodies. Further back the line  
Of Locris forms a strong reserve.' He said.  
The diff'rent bands, confiding in his skill,  
Move on successive. The Plataeans first  
Against the hill are station'd. In their van  
Is Dithyrambus rank'd. Triumphant joy  
Distends their bosoms, sparkles in their eyes.

' Bless'd be the great Diomedon,' they shout,  
' Who brings another hero to our line.  
Hail, Dithyrambus! Hail, illustrious youth!  
Had tender age permitted, thou hadst gain'd  
An early palm at Marathon.' His post

He takes. His gladness blushes on his cheek  
 Amid the foremost rank. Around him crowd  
 The long-try'd warriors. Their unnumber'd scars  
 Discov'ring, they in ample phrase recount  
 Their various dangers. He their wounds surveys  
 In veneration, nor distains to hear  
 The oft-repeated tale. From Sparta's king  
 Return'd, the gracious Agis these address'd—

' Leonidas salutes Plataea's chief,  
 And Dithyrambus. To your swords he grants  
 A further effort with Plataea's band,  
 If yet by toil unconquer'd. But I see  
 That all, unyielding, court the promis'd fight.  
 Hail, glorious veterans! This signal day  
 May your victorious arms augment the wreaths  
 Around your venerable heads, and grace  
 Thermopylæ with Marathonian fame.'

This said, he hastens back. Meantime advance  
 The Mantinean, Diophantus brave,  
 Then Hegesander, Tegea's dauntless chief,  
 Who near Diomedon, in equal range,

Erect their standards. Next the Thebans form.  
 Alcmaeon, bold Eupalamus, succeed,  
 With their Corinthian and Phliasian bands.  
 Last, on the Malian shore, Mycenæ's youth  
 Aristobulus draws. From Oeta's side  
 Down to the bay, in well-connected length,  
 Each gleaming rank contains a hundred spears,  
 While twenty bucklers ev'ry file condense.  
 A sure support, Dieneces behind  
 Arrays the Spartans. Godlike Agis here,  
 There Menalippus, by their leader stand,  
 Two bulwarks. Breathing ardour in the rear,  
 The words of Alpheus fan the growing flame  
 Of expectation through his light-arm'd force;  
 While Polydorus, present in his thoughts,  
 To vengeance sharpens his indignant soul.

No foe is seen. No distant shout is heard.  
 This pause of action Dithyrambus chose.  
 The solemn scene on Oeta to his friend  
 He open'd large; pourtray'd Melissa's form,  
 Reveal'd her mandate; when Platæa's chief—

' Such elevation of a female mind  
 Bespeaks Melissa worthy to obtain  
 The conference she asks. This wond'rous dame,  
 Amid her hymns, conceives some lofty thought  
 To make these slaves, who loiter in their camp,  
 Dread ev'n our women. But, my gentle friend,  
 Say, Dithyrambus, whom the liquid spell  
 Of song enchants, should I reproach the gods,  
 Who form'd me cold to music's pleasing pow'r?  
 Or should I thank them that the soft'ning charm  
 Of sound or numbers ne'er dissolv'd my soul?  
 Yet I confess thy valour breaks that charm,  
 Which may enrapture, not unman, thy breast.'

To whom his friend—' Doth he, whose lays record  
 The woes of Priam, and the Grecian fame,  
 Doth he dissolve thy spirit? Yet he flows  
 In all the sweetness harmony can breathe.'

' No, by the Gods,' Diomedon rejoins.  
 ' I feel that mighty muse. I see the car  
 Of fierce Achilles, see th' encumber'd wheels  
 O'er heroes driv'n, and clotted with their gore.

Another too demands my soul's esteem,  
 Brave Æschylus of Athens. I have seen  
 His muse begirt by furies, while she swell'd  
 Her tragic numbers. Him, in equal rage  
 His country's foes o'erwhelming, I beheld  
 At Marathon. If Phœbus would diffuse  
 Such fire through ev'ry bard, the tuneful band  
 Might in themselves find heroes for their songs.  
 But, son of Harmatides, lift thine eye  
 To yonder point, remotest in the bay.  
 Those seeming clouds, which o'er the billows fleet  
 Successive round the jutting land, are sails.  
 Th' Athenian pendant hastens to salute  
 Leonidas. O Æschylus, my friend,  
 First in the train of Phœbus and of Mars,  
 Be thou on board! Swift-bounding o'er the waves,  
 Come, and be witness to heroic deeds!  
 Brace thy strong harp with loftier-sounding chords,  
 To celebrate this battle! Fall who may;  
 But, if they fall with honour, let their names  
 Round festive goblets in thy numbers ring,  
 And joy, not grief, accompany the song.'

Conversing thus, their courage they beguil'd,  
Which else, impatient of inactive hours,  
At long-suspended glory had repin'd.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.















